An Indian Cloth Painting and its Art Worlds: Perceptions of Orissan *Patta* Paintings

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For Anne Marie,
with love.

Abstract

This study examines how a particular kind of Indian painting comes to have value. The focus of analysis is on the social life of paintings rather than the purely aesthetic. This is explored through a detailed examination of perceptions of the paintings amongst producers, consumers and art critics. The study is an attempt to apply the sociological institutional theory of art on Orissan *patta* paintings by developing the sociological approach into what I consider to be an anthropological approach.

The Orissan *patta* paintings, with which the study is concerned, are circulated not only within India but also abroad and thus move through different cultural milieus. Following Arjun Appadurai (1986) *pattas* can be said to have a social life, whose value and meaning change through time and place (1986). The paintings are located in several value systems. These systems will often meet in the very transaction which moves a painting from one sphere to another.

One of the central questions raised in the thesis is how particular kind of paintings come to have value and whether they are endowed with different layers of value. The model I have developed is of an art world consisting of interpenetrating layers with different semantic registers. The differences in evaluation and interpretation of the paintings at different points in their "social life" lead me to argue that the layers have the character of separate yet interacting worlds.

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Some Ethical Reflections

Unlike the majority of anthropological studies, any attempt at "hiding" the villages and towns discussed in this thesis, through a strategy of anonymity, would be futile. This is first of all due to Puri's position in India as one of the most important, if not the most important, pilgrim town. As the paintings discussed are related to the temple of *Jagannatha* in Puri, it has not been possible to avoid referring to the place. Secondly, there is only one village in the district of Puri which has acquired the position of "Crafts Village" promoted by tourists guides as a place one must visit. A change of name would therefore only serve a symbolic purpose.

The same is true for the majority of the individuals presented in the thesis. Unlike the standard anthropological thesis I have chosen not to disguise people or incidents unless naming them causes problems for the people involved. There are thus instances where individuals are referred to as painter or art specialist x or y. In addition I have left out any information which might harm the business of individual painters - the single most important issue to the majority. My choice of presenting people undisguised is thus also partly a result of the wishes of the painters, who without exception wanted me to write a piece about their work, their lives, and problems resulting from the trade of paintings. I hope I have done them justice.

Note on transliteration

My Oriya transliteration in the main text follows, as far as possible, a phonetic spelling of words. As a consequence I have rendered the images discussed here as *patta* with a double t rather than a single t as in transliterations of other north Indian languages. In the main text vowel length are indicated by macrons. Other diacritical marks used are in the glossary only and follow the transliteration suggested by Das Gupta (1968).

Although I have generally transliterated Oriya words phonetically there are a few exceptions which should be mentioned. For the sake of convenience I have preferred to use *Krishna* rather than *Krushna* and *Brahmin* rather than *Brāhmana* (in the main text). With the exception of *varna, Vishvakarma,* and *Visnu* the transliteration reflects Oriya use of "b" for consonants rendered "v" in north Indian languages.

English translations are given in parenthesis on first usage and where the word is reintroduced in later sections. In Oriya no distinction is made between singular and plural nouns. I have nevertheless pluralised Oriya plural nouns to make the text easily comprehensible. Throughout the thesis Oriya words and a few English words, commonly used by painters, have been italicised.

Introduction

Aesthetic Approaches to Art

This thesis is an argument for the necessity of developing the sociological 'institutional theory' of art worlds. The utility of this will be examined in an Orissan context. Before presenting the detailed Orissan ethnography which comprises the bulk of this thesis, however, two earlier dominant approaches to art will be sketched. Traces of these theories still abound within anthropological approaches to art and prevent its full realisation: the study of art practices, discourses, and social facts.

The first of these approaches is associated with Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-1768). His aesthetic ideal - which he described as "the chief aim of all art"[1] - was "beauty":

> "Beauty in painting is as much in the drawing and in the composition as in the colour and in the light and shade. In the drawing, beauty itself is the touchstone.." (Winckelmann, in Irwin 1972:98).

Winckelmann did not conceive of "beauty" as a relative property. Far from the idea of beauty being in the eye of the beholder, to Winckelmann only a connoisseur knows what is truly beautiful:

> "Myriads, you [s]ay, the bulk of mankind, have not even the lea[s]t notion of Grace - but what do they know of beauty, ta[s]te, genero[s]ity, or all the higher luxuries of the [s]oul? The[s]e flowers of the human mind were not intended for univer[s]al growth, though their [s]eeds lie in every brea[s]t" (Winckelmann 1765, in Fusseli 1972:275).

An implicit connoisseurship was also characteristic of the formalist approach to art, developed two centuries later[2]. Clive Bell and Roger Fry were two central figures in the development of a formalist approach to the

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[1] Winckelmann 1765, in Fusseli (1972:4).

[2] This approach was developed partly as a defense of modern abstract art.

visual arts. To these formalists, aesthetic experience and the assessment of art depended exclusively upon its intrinsic qualities: the properties of colour, shape and line. The artist and his intentions, the place and time of creation, and the response of the audience were not considered significant to a "pure aesthetic experience".

In 1913, Bell writes:

> "..to appreciate a work of art we need bring with us nothing from life, no knowledge of its ideas and affairs, no familiarity with its emotions...we need bring with us nothing but a sense of form and colour and a knowledge of three-dimensional space" (Bell 1958:27-28).

In 1920 Fry, in a similar fashion, argues:

> "..in..aesthetic apprehension of an object of art..no element of curiosity, no reference to actual life, comes in: our apprehension is unconditioned by considerations of space or time: it is irrelevant to us to know whether the bowl was made seven hundred years ago in China, or in New York yesterday" (Fry 1920: 35).

These two approaches to art, which have greatly influenced western art perception, are examples of highly specific cultural discourses and, as such, anthropologically worthless except as cultural facts. As Alfred Gell says:

> "..this willingness to place ourselves under the spell of all manner of works of art, though it contributes very much to the richness of our cultural experience, is paradoxically the major stumbling-block in the path of the anthropology of art.." (1992:40-41).

Gell suggests that the study of aesthetics is to the domain of art what the study of theology is to the domainn of religion:

> "..aesthetics is a branch of moral discourse which depends on the acceptance of the initial articles of faith: that in the aesthetically valued object there resides the principle of the True and the Good, and that the study of aesthetically valued objects constitutes a path toward transcendence. In so far as such modern souls possess a religion, that religion is the religion of art, the religion whose shrines consist of theatres, libraries, and art galleries, whose priests and bishops are painters and poets, whose theologians are critics, and whose dogma is the dogma of universal aestheticism" (ibid.:41-42).

The problem is this universal aestheticism which, says Gell, dictates that we "attribute value to a culturally recognised category of art objects" (ibid.:40). This calls for the development of an alternative to the aesthetic approach to works of art: a theory which goes beyond conventional ideas of beauty as a crucial part of aesthetics and is sympathetic to cross cultural factors.

An Alternative to Aesthetic Approaches to Art

In contrast to Winckelmann's approach and the formal aesthetic theories briefly referred to the sociological theory of art, variously described as 'institutional' or 'art world' theory, offers an approach which is anthropologically extremely fruitful.

The first suggestions as to what a sociology of art might contain appeared in the 1930s (see for example Sewter 1935) and in 1940 Adolph S. Tomars presented the first systematic outline of a possible sociology of art. As the term indicates, a sociology of art focuses on the context in which art objects are created, that is the total activity of art, rather than the art object itself. The study of this complex of art processes - of the interaction and interdependence of the artist, the work of art and the public, can be considered analytically in terms of three areas: Firstly, the artist, his creative activity and the standards that guide it[3]; secondly, the art work itself, the objective embodiment of that activity and those standards; thirdly, the audience or public which appreciates and values the work, and the standards in the light of which it does so (Tomars 1940:25). This is done with the aim of understanding how the social environment influences artistic creation.

The sociology of art is concerned with the experience of art, as a tangible and observable factor, and all the aspects which determine or influence

[3] An analysis of the artist and his/her creative activity has been specified by Silbermann as including: the artist's social position and relationships, social origin, ethnic, economic and educational background as well as style of living, residence, leisure activities, working habits, and attitudes (Silbermann 1968:588-89).

changes in the practice of art (Silbermann 1968:579). As a social phenomenon, art manifests itself as a social process and activity. This process is the relation of interdependence, interrelation and interaction between the producers and consumers of art within an art world, a concept to which we shall shortly return. Thus, the consumers are seen as an active influence on artistic creation (ibid.:582).

With a sociological approach, "beauty" becomes a relationship between the artwork and the observer who judges the work "beautiful" in terms of his standards of beauty; in other words it is in the attitude or state of mind of the person looking at a work (Tomars 1940:10). Thus, beauty does not exist as an intrinsic quality in art. Following this line of thought, it is obvious that the question "what constitutes good (and bad) art?" is misleading. As Moeran has argued the relevant question is:

> "What is art that is good for whom, accepted by what sort of people, and on the basis of what criteria? (Moeran 1990a:222).

According to Tomars, aesthetic standards are group standards representing social values. They exist as objective realities for the group but they have no universal validity. On the contrary, it is relative and limited to the group for whom it provides the standards of judgement (Tomars 1940:396)[4].

In 1965 the philosopher Arthur C. Danto wrote "The Artworld", an article which inspired the development of the so called "institutional theory of art". For Danto the term "art world" covers the broad group of institutions which are responsible for the fact that some - but not all - objects are identified as works of art. An object becomes a work of art only within an art world,

[4] Tomars' use of the term "group" is somewhat problematic assuming that a specific group of people constitute a homogenous unit. In the last decade there has been an increasing awareness amongst anthropologists that there will always be nuanced differences and varied perspectives amongst the individuals of a specific cultural group. There might thus be people from one cultural group whose perspectives are more like those of individuals from another group. However, as long as the heterogeneity of any cultural group is kept in mind, the simplification of the term might be allowed for, for the sake of convenience.

and only when the art world and an artist share a theory about what art is (Eaton 1988:92-93).

Danto's approach to art was developed in "Art Worlds" (1982) in which the sociologist Howard S. Becker expanded a more explicitly sociological institutional theory of art[5]. Becker was, as he himself acknowledged, "of course, not [...] the first to think about the arts in this way. There is a hearty tradition of relativistic, sceptical, "democratic" writing about the arts" (1982:Xi).

Following Danto, Becker emphasises that art is what people say it is, the central point being whether the context in which makers, viewers, and objects appear is ripe for aesthetic reception (Eaton 1988:7). According to Becker, a work of art is a joint product of a network of people who cooperate to bring the work into existence. These people can be said to constitute an art world, consisting of the producers, consumers, critics and dealers of a form of art. Becker has defined art worlds as consisting of:

> "all the people whose activities are necessary to the production of the characteristic works which that world, and perhaps others as well, define as art. Members of art worlds co-ordinate the activities by which work is produced by referring to a body of conventional understandings embodied in common practice and in frequently used artefacts" (Becker 1982:34).

An art world does not have clear boundaries; on the contrary it is characterised by a certain fluidity. Groups of people who were an important part of an art world yesterday may not be found to have any role in the creation tomorrow (ibid.:35).

It should be noted that art worlds vary in the degree to which they are independent, operating in relative freedom from interference by other organised groups in their society - an art world, however, never exists in

[5] Danto's philosophically centred interests are, among other things, concerned with definitions and classifications of art and ironically he considers the institutional theory of art alien to his work (Danto 1981:Viii).

isolation. Other art worlds, in addition to economic, political and social considerations constantly influence any one art world. For this reason Becker warns us against the kind of sociological approach which treats art as relatively autonomous (ibid.:39). A last point to be made is that Becker shows that aesthetic appraisal can never be seen in isolation from the processes of production, social networks and marketing. Thus no art form can be seen for what it is "in itself" (Bourdieu 1979:1-7, Moeran 1984:25-7, 199Ob:132).

Towards an Anthropology of Art

The importance of the theory of art worlds is to be found in its attention to the network of people contributing to a specific kind of art. This might seem obvious, but has never the less too often been ignored in studies of art and craft. Amongst art historians and connoisseurs there has been a tendency to focus on art objects and artists in isolation, assuming inherent and universal qualities in art. Local evaluations and discourses have not been sufficiently considered as they were thought to be irrelevant to an understanding of the aesthetic merits of the art, the judgement of which was the task of the art specialists. An example of this approach to objects was the much discussed exhibition "Primitivism" held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (1984-85), in which "context" was explicitly ignored without accepting the responsibility of such a divorce (Faris 1988:778).

Partly in opposition to the formalist approach, anthropologists, until the early 1970s, stressed the importance of exploring art within its indigenous holistic context. The problem with this functionalistic approach was not only that it occasionally left the objects themselves behind, drowned in a mass of information on ritual significance for example[6], but also that the

[6] James Faris has commented on the insistence on context amongst anthropologists: "The motives for this insistence, while perhaps honourable (and of paramount importance to the discipline) [of anthropology], could be argued to deny objects of the Other any potential on their own - any freedom from the security of context - almost as if in their emancipation they

privileged place of "anthropological" context was often seen in isolation: the world outside the village was virtually ignored. Moreover an evaluation of the art objects in terms of their own local systems of evaluations was still lacking. It was precisely the importance of considering local aesthetic evaluations that formed the basis of Sally and Richard Price's argument, in their analysis of Afro-American art (1980).

In the 1970s and 1980s anthropologists expanded their fields of study to consider the international market's influence on local art production (Ben-Amos 1976; Graburn 1976; Maduro 1976a; Silver 1979a, 1979b; Richter 1980; Ross and Reichert 1983; Jules-Rosette 1984; Moeran 1984).

In the last part of the 1980s studies on the consumption of what has been called "primitive" art in the West were undertaken. These studies were largely concerned with the displacement of the objects and the symbolic significance attached to the same when displayed in a new context (Clifford 1988a, 1988b; MacClancy 1988; Manning 1985; Errington 1989[7]; Price 1989; Torgovnick 1990)[8].

Studies of Indian Art

Definitions of what constitute art and aesthetic production are diverse. I have chosen to use the terms broadly in order to consider a variety of writings.

There is a large literature on Indian art most of which is characterised by a mythologising approach concerned with cosmic symbolism. The most

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might be revealed as, well, primitive" (1988:778-79).

[7] For a discussion of "What became Authentic Primitive Art" see Errington (1994).

[8] For an outline of the changing paradigms in the study of African Art see Steiner (1994:10-13).

obvious examples date back to the beginning of the 20th century when A.K. Coomaraswamy and E.B. Havell praised the rich fine Indian arts tradition as having a sublime spiritual, uniquely Eastern aesthetic[9]. The metaphysical image of Indian art was elaborated in the work of later scholars such as Stella Kramrisch (1946) and Pupul Jayakar (1980).

With a sceptical eye to this kind of mythologising, anthropologists have more recently begun to concern themselves with objects in relation to sets of discourses. In her study of dress and identity in an Indian context, Emma Tarlo shows how clothes play an active role in the identity construction of individuals, families, castes, regions and nations. Clothes and disputes about clothes are part of a system through which people define themselves (Tarlo 1992).

A different perspective on the relation between material culture and identity construction has been presented by Patricia Uberoi in an analysis of calendar art[10] - a genre which, as we shall see, has asserted significant influence on *patta* painting (1990)[11]. Uberoi shows how representations of women and reconstructions of "femininity" relate to wider discourses concerning the "nation".

It is not my intention to present here a complete overview of anthropological writings on Indian art. However, a few more examples of the perspectives with which anthropologists have approached Indian art ought to be mentioned.

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[9] For a discussion of their ideas see chapter 2, pp.101-106.

[10] This term has recently been disputed by Chris Pinney who has shown that the casual use of the term to describe a diverse genre of images implies an ahistoricism (Pinney: Forthcoming).

[11] Unless otherwise mentioned, paintings in this thesis refer to the Orissan *patta* paintings also known as *patta chitra*. The most common term of reference is *patta* for which reason I use that rather than *patta chitra* throughout the thesis, except in cases where I quote. *Patta*, a term of Sanskrit origin, means canvas and *chitra* means picture, consequently *patta chitra* means picture on canvas.

Daniel Miller's study of pottery in central India, in which he explores the factors underlying variability in artefacts, combines insights from social anthropology, cognitive studies, and most obviously, archaeology. To Miller, material categories represent "an order that is imposed upon the world through the creation of material objects" (1985:10). Miller sees material categories as a part of the overall creation of cultural order and argues that they may be used for the study of the social and material relations of which they are a product. For Miller, an emphasis on variability in form and categorisation presents a solution to the problem of lack of exegesis. Miller says:

> "The members of the society which produces and uses the objects may have very little to say about them; articulation at the level of language may be a poor reflection of the complex expression evidenced in the actual range of products and interaction with them" (ibid.).

Studying the variability in form of material culture is one way of redressing the lack of exegesis. In this thesis I have, as we shall see, chosen an alternative solution to the problem.

In addition, Indian painting has been examined by anthropologists with differing degrees of success. One example is Renaldo Maduro's study of the Nathdvara painters from Rajasthan and their paintings (1976a,b)[12]. The study provides a clear example of why it is necessary to consider local notions of art.

In a discussion of the Brahmin painters of Nathdwara (1976a), Maduro argues that the sale of paintings to foreign tourists has caused a decrease in the quality of paintings. Market demands, requiring efficiency, haste and products favoured by tourists, have put an end to individuality and creativity. Moreover, the painters have lost their self-respect because the indigenous art-buying public no longer values the old artistic traditions

[12] For an alternative informative and richly illustrated study of the Nathdvara paintings see Ambalal (1987).

(1976a:241-2). Maduro's belief in essentialist beauty is perhaps more obvious in his research monograph on the Nathdwara painter community. A few quotations will clearly show this.

Describing a painter's supply shop run by an Adi Gaur painter, Maduro says:

> "The shop sells only mediocre paintings, however; for 'good' or creative work, the buyer must still visit individual painters at home" (1976b:58).

And he continues, without any reference to what the painters might have to say on the matter, commenting on the so called "*pichhvai*" paintings:

> "There has been a drop in the quality of *pichwai* [sic] painting. Many of the smaller and inexpensive *pichwais* are now completed in great haste and sold in bulk" (ibid.:60).

In contrast to Maduro, the historian of art Joanna Williams argues for considering artisans' own evaluation. Her discussion is based on the outcome of two tests carried out amongst *Chitrakāras* in Puri district[13]. The first test involved asking a number of painters to rank in quality and discuss twelve certificates painted in the *patta* technique, each a different version of a traditional subject. The second test was based on presenting to different painters nine *pattas* all illustrating the scene *Māyā Mruga* (see chapter 3, figure 29, g.) from *Rāmāyana*. As we shall see in chapter 5, Williams' denial, in the second test, of information about the identity of the artist of a painting obstructs her desire to understand local evaluations.

Williams interesting contribution is valuable for the insight it brings to local aesthetic notions. The focus, however, is too narrow and ultimately limits the scope of the study. This is surprising as Williams is astutely aware that the artists present the views of one group only:

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[13] I was not aware of Williams' work until J. P. Das referred to it during my fieldwork. My enquiries at that time to Williams concerning details of the publication were then fruitless.

> "Thus it seems reasonable that ultimately no one kind of people can be allowed to speak for a single, unified Indian aesthetic, or even for an Orissan aesthetic. The *citrakāras'* [sic] views are presented not as a microcosm for the macrocosm of Indian art as a whole but as the views of one accessible group whose analogue one might at least consider for other situations. The standards are as pluralistic as Indian society is" (Williams 1988:15).

One of the reasons for William's exclusive focus on the artists and disregard of other groups, was their denial that "there were other kinds of people whose judgments should be taken seriously, *rasikas* or *citra-premis*, in the sense of connoisseurs" (1988:15). But I suspect that it was the nature of William's question that produced this denial rather than painters' sense of the absence of the art worlds. Although Williams claims to argue against earlier indological notions, she fails to acknowledge the wider bureaucratic structures in which contemporary Orissan artists' work is evaluated.

In this thesis I explore the institutional framework showing how painters respond to and depend upon networks which are part of a bureaucratic structure in the 20th century market. The people who are part of this structure are not called "*rasikas*" or "*citra-premis*" and this is perhaps the reason why Williams does not recognise their importance in the *patta* art world.

"I am acutely aware", says Williams, "that I personally colored all evaluation and discussion in many ways. In fact, if I had [to do it] again, I would make this inevitable intrusion even greater by leading the discussion in new directions" (ibid.:16). This is precisely what I have tried to do in this thesis examining artists as inhabitants of a modern world - a small part of a much wider context or system.

There are striking similarities between aspects of our approach reflecting, I think, a convergence of analytic thinking rather than any pre-existing

feature of the Orissan art world. The parallelism of methodology thus reflects what is happening in late 1980-90s anthropology: there is a shared interest in the specificity and concreteness of low level evaluation. As O'Hanlon has so ably demonstrated (1993) this follows the rejection of anthropologists' earlier unanswerable epistemological concerns and reflects a search for new strategies for elucidating verbalisation.

Some of the writing on popular film in India parallels the approach to *pattas* which I have developed in this thesis. Rosie Thomas has argued for avoiding the use of Western evaluations when discussing Indian popular cinema and has instead suggested using the terms of reference of Indian popular cinema itself. In her discussion of Hindi films she considers the film-makers' own descriptions and expectations of their films and, briefly, that of audiences (Thomas 1985).

Audiences and their opinions of Tamil cinema are the central focus in Sara Dickey's work (1993). However, she also considers film-makers and their attitudes to the tastes of their patrons. She argues that film-makers and audiences, by and large, can be categorised as two distinct classes: while film-makers belong to the middle and upper classes, audiences largely belong to the lower class. Dickey shows how class influences perception of cinema and the making and reception of films.

Despite the significance of these approaches, several important works on Indian art omit any sustained consideration of local evaluations or, just as problematic, credit those as the only ones to be taken seriously. The point is, of course, that the evaluations of local artists must be considered **along with** evaluations of other members of an art world.

It is striking that a consideration of local evaluations, with the few exceptions noted above, has generally been neglected in anthropological works on Indian arts and crafts. In this study I hope to show that differing

perceptions within the wider art world deserve critical attention within the anthropological debate on art.

An Example of an Anthropological Approach to Art

The aim of my study is to examine how a particular kind of Indian painting comes to have value. This is done by a detailed examination of perceptions of the paintings amongst producers, consumers and art critics; the focus of analysis, however, is on social organisation rather than the purely "aesthetic". The study is an attempt to apply the sociological institutional theory of art on Orissan *patta* paintings by developing the sociological approach into what I consider to be an anthropological approach.

The material has lead me to conclude that it is not possible to come to an understanding of either the paintings or the social life of the same without identifying individual artists who have had a profound affect on the genre and the life evolving around it. This insight is in line with contemporary anthropological studies of art which have recently come to emphasise the individual artist and his oeuvre (Pinney forthcoming).

It is paradoxical that while anthropologists are moving away from a concern with the social structure of art as a product of social formation and towards a recognition of the individual artist (See for example Bascom 1969; Smith 1992), art history is moving in the opposite direction, becoming increasingly concerned with the political and social conditions in which art has been used and produced (Clark 1973; Guha-Thakurta 1992). My approach is located somewhere between these two tendencies. In general terms I am concerned with biography, that is, individual artists, the history of the genre, and the relationship between the art and other popular forms, as well as its makers, critics and buyers.

This study is closely related to the tourist art studies described by Steiner in his recent contribution to the study of art in the international market and has, in common with these studies, largely been concerned with the production end of a cross-cultural exchange. Steiner stresses how his study, in contrast to previous studies, aims to bridge the distance between these fields by studying the mechanisms of exchange which move art objects from Africa to the rest of the world. Unlike Steiner's analysis in which customers rarely buy directly from producers but rely on middlemen, the paintings in this study often undergo direct exchange. A main focus on the production end does not therefore necessarily exclude the possibility of bridging the distance between the field of production and the field of consumption - these fields might take place in one and the same sphere.

The Orissan *patta* paintings which provide the locus of my study are, however, circulated not only within India but also abroad and thus move through specific cultural milieus. Using the terminology of Arjun Appadurai, they can be said to have a social life, whose value and meaning change through time and place (1986). Although the paintings are located in several systems of value, changes in time and place are not prerequisites for a painting to undergo a transformation in evaluation resulting from these distinct systems. On the contrary, different systems of value will often meet in the very transaction which moves a painting from one sphere to another.

The difference in the systems of value discussed here is distinct from that which differentiates Steiner's "enchanted worlds" which he describes as "the spirit world from which the objects are artfully removed and the art world into which the objects are spirited" (1994:160). Steiner explores the way in which objects are moved from one system of value to another, analyzing the specific moment in time - the commodity phase - which separates an object from its traditional sphere of value as ritual or sacred icon, as well as its modernist sphere of value as an object of art.

In the case of *patta* paintings, this change of sphere generally does not take place, the exception being the paintings intended for pilgrims. It is necessary here to clarify the dual function of *pattas* which in some cases are formally identical[14]. First there are the *pattas* made for pilgrims. These paintings are intentionally laden with meaning and are thus thick with religious significations. They can therefore be said to belong to a realm of being which Danto has described as that of "art, religion, and philosophy" (1988:23)[15]. These paintings are occasionally purchased by tourists and can be said to undergo the change, described by Steiner, from a traditional sphere of value as ritual or sacred icon to a modernist sphere of value as an object of art.

Second there are the *pattas* made for tourists. The essence of these paintings, which lack the intention of the pilgrim *pattas*, are their function as commodities. In contrast to the pilgrim *pattas* these paintings are "empty vessels": "merely part of ..The Prose of the World" (Danto 1988:23). Some might object that paintings depicting themes from the *purānās* can never be "empty vessels". However, the point is that the two types of paintings have different functions and thus distinct philosophical agendas.

Danto's important contribution in the article referred to above, is the attention he draws to commentators' consistent lack of interest in local assessments of the classification of aesthetic productions as artworks or mere things[16]. However, Danto's approach also contains a serious problem.

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[14] The *thiā bādhiā* motif and the *Jagannātha* triad are examples of this (see chapter 3, figures 13,21).

[15] Arguing that differences between artworks and mere things are not of a kind that meets or even can meet the eye Danto describes an imagined example of two people and their world view reflected in their attitude to their pots and baskets. Whereas baskets to the Basket People embody the principles of the universe itself, the essence of their pots is simply defined by daily function. This philosophical allocation is reversed for the Pot People for whom the use of pots is transcended by their meaning while baskets are seen as mere things (Danto 1988:23-24).

[16] i.e. emphasis is placed on the discourses surrounding objects rather than their formal properties.

When it comes to artworks Danto accords authority to the people culturally responsible, who assign value and meaning to the productions (Danto 1988:23-24, 30-31). He thus privileges the point of production rather than reception. In assuming that a single set of wise persons are the ones who know what is or is not art, the life of an object after production is dismissed. However, objects have careers in an ongoing process of reception, interpretation and evaluation. This is among other things what has caused Faris to criticize Danto for yielding to the hegemony of a functionalist anthropology (Faris 1988:778).

The majority of *pattas* which end up as trade objects on the national and international market are produced for that market and are intended for decorative purposes rather than as sacred icons[17]. However, even if these paintings do not change from a traditional sphere of value to a modernist sphere of value in Steiner's sense (they have never been thick with religious significance), they nevertheless undergo different evaluations rooted in distinct systems of value. When purchased by tourists these paintings or "empty vessels" are "spirited" as authentic objects of art.

The main concern of this thesis is precisely the assignment of these values which take place amongst the people who make up the links in the art worlds. One of the central questions raised in this thesis is how particular kinds of paintings come to have value and whether they are endowed with different configurations of values. The model I have developed is of an art world consisting of interpenetrating blurred and shifting layers with different semantic registers. The differences in evaluation and interpretation of the paintings at different points in their "social life" lead me to argue that the layers have the character of separate, yet interacting worlds.

[17] According to the painters the paintings, other than the ones made for pilgrims, are intended for decorative purposes. This is confirmed by the customers, Indian as well as foreign, who explain that their purchases are intended as wall hangings or gifts. It is of course not my intention to preclude the possibility that a painting bought by a Hindu family and intended as wall hanging might also have a religious value.

I am aware that the term 'art worlds' and in particular, perhaps, the word 'layer' have obvious limitations and contain an implicit danger of over-stressing the disjunction between different groups. Another possible way of describing the model I aim to communicate would be in terms of 'clusters' existing in a three dimensional hierarchical matrix. Yet this still does not communicate the fluid nature of these clusters or layers which are context dependent and ever changing.

This interest in the endowment of value made me focus on the discourses which evolve around the paintings and one of the issues which consequently emerges in the thesis is the problem of exegesis. Anthropologists as well as philosophers have devoted considerable attention to this problem. For example Anthony Forge's discussion of "the problem of meaning in art" (1979) has had a profound influence on interpretations of local exegesis - or lack of the same - on art forms. Recently O'Hanlon has suggested a very useful way of thinking around this, perhaps, fallacious problem (1993). Inherent in Forge's argument is the idea that the coming to consciousness destroys the potency of the symbolic. Arguments of a parallel kind have been raised by Bourdieu (1977, 1990); Bloch (1979), Lyotard (Carrol 1987), and Sperber (1975), the common factor being the focus on the discrepancy between discourse and performative experience or practice. This issue will be raised again in the conclusion.

The Location of my Study

The state of Orissa is situated on the north-eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal, India and consists of a coastal area inundated by the sea, a deltaic plain, and, a mountainous inland region intersected by rivers which flow into the Bay of Bengal[18]. The latter is predominantly inhabited by tribal people whereas the coastal region is primarily populated by non-tribal

[18] Orissa covers an area of 155,707 km² with a varying population density. 88 % of the population of 26,370,271 lives in rural areas (Statistical Abstract, GOI 1989:3).

Hindus. Although relatively fertile, the delta faces problems due to frequent floods and saline subsoil water. The majority of the population of Orissa is employed in agriculture, which compared to agriculture in India in general is one of the lowest yielding. This is, among other things, reflected in the per-capita income in Orissa which in 1987-88 was the second lowest in India (Lerche 1991:21-22). The high population density on the deltaic plain (the only area which can support a dense population) has caused severe pressure on the land leading to widespread unemployment. Craft production has been one of the measures through which the Orissan Government has attempted to ameliorate this.

The deltaic plain is divided into the four administrative districts of Puri, Cuttack, Balasore, and Ganjam[19]. The fieldwork was carried out in the district of Puri, where the majority of the painters relevant to this study live. Some of the painters live in Bhubaneshwar, the capital of Orissa. They stay in the old part of the town in the vicinity of the Lingarāj temple. Bhubaneshwar is praised by many local Government employees, as well as some of the younger painters from Puri and Raghurājpur for its modern town planning and broad roads - something outsiders, perhaps, would only appreciate after having spent the monsoon in the old towns of, for example, Cuttack or Puri.

The majority of painters, however, are settled in the town of Puri - one of four celebrated pilgrim centres (*dhamas*) of India - and two nearby villages[20]. Pilgrims travel from all over the country to visit the Hindu temple housing the God *Jagannātha* who became the state deity of Orissa

[19] For a discussion on Orissa's transition from a traditional Hindu Kingdom to a State, see Swallow (1977:13-51).

[20] Puri is one of the four *tīrthas*: Badrinath in the Himalayas north, Rameśvaram in the south, Puruṣottama in the east and Dvarka in the west. These places of pilgrimage are known as *dhamas* or cities of light (Starza-Majewski 1989:253).

under the imperial Gangas (c. 1112-1435 A.D.) and the Suryavamsha dynasty (1435-1540 A.D.) (Kulke 1974:63). The cult of *Jagannātha* was the focus of an interdisciplinary study in the 1970s[21]. The "Orissa Research Project" (1969-76) examined the origin and development of the *Jagannātha* cult, the temple city and pilgrim centre of Puri and their role in the formation of the regional tradition of Orissa[22].

Outline of this Thesis

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 1 consists of two parts, the first of which describes the "community" of painters which has provided the unit of my study. The second part of the chapter describes the village in which I have conducted a major part of the fieldwork. The reason for focusing on this particular village is its official promotion as the crafts village of Orissa and the place of origin of traditional paintings - the village can thus at some level be said to be an artificial construction.

In chapter 2 I examine the so called "revival" of *patta* paintings which took place after India gained Independence, a process inaugurated by a Polish American couple named Halina and Philip Zealey. It is seen in the context of the national support of handicrafts all over India. The discussion moves back in time to discuss a parallel Western involvement with Indian art which took place in the late 19th and early 20th century. I thus acknowledge the need to situate the study in a wider historical context as a necessary step to understand the contemporary production of paintings.

Chapter 3 opens with a presentation of *pattas* produced in the last part of the 19th century and the early 20th century and preserved in museum-archives. The second section is concerned with examples of contemporary

[21] Other Orissan cults have attracted the attention of scholars. Deborah Swallow has studied *guru* cults in Urban Orissa (1977).

[22] See Eschmann, Kulke & Tripathi 1984. For further reference see also Kulke (1974, 1979).

paintings collected during my fieldwork. Rather than focusing on the unusual, I have chosen to present paintings which give an overview of the kind of images which were most commonly produced during my stay in the district of Puri. When relevant I introduce parallel examples of oleographs, wood cut, metal plate, and calendar prints against which the painters and consumers read or define their own or others' paintings. The chapter closes with some examples of paintings specifically intended for ritual use.

Chapter 4 is concerned with painting work related to various religious activities during the yearly cycle of festivals. The first section discusses an example of paintings made for the *Jagannātha* temple, followed by some examples of painters' work for *Brahmin* patrons and an example of work done entirely for the benefit of the painters themselves. In addition the painters' relationship with the deities they give form to, is discussed.

Chapter 5 is concerned with *patta* painters' discourses on paintings. The first part of the chapter centres on comments upon *patta* paintings, whereas the second part focuses upon painters' responses to and use of calendar art, other regional Indian styles and European oil painting. Some of the particular visual fields painters use in the process of evaluation and creation is part of what distinguishes their perceptions from that of art specialists.

In chapter 6 I discuss elite discourses on paintings and their corresponding ideas of authenticity and "authentic craftsman-ship". Furthermore, I consider the characteristics of the visual fields referred to in these discourses. The first part of the chapter is concerned with conceptions of paintings amongst the local elite in Orissa, as well as the national craft elite. The second part of the chapter is concerned with the official recognition of the skill of certain painters manifested in the donation of awards and the effect they have.

In chapter 7 I bring together parts of the preceding material in a discussion of the relations between the painters, their co-operation and the occasional conflicts which arise from the different strategies and success of certain painters. In addition, I discuss their relations to middlemen and tourists. It is often in situations of conflict, arising at the local level of the art world, that the permeation of ideas from other layers of the art world are most obvious: diverse ideas from intersecting parts of the art world come into conflict. Criticism often grounded in ideas of the traditional and conceptions of authenticity is one of the ways in which painters can express their contempt for their colleagues.

In the conclusion I consider the painters' responses - or in some cases lack of response - to my model of the art world as I presented it during a final visit 1994. This leads to a general discussion of the problem of the discrepancy between analytical discourse and living practice.

The Fieldwork

This study is based on three visits to Orissa, the first taking place from December 1988 till February 1989. I had then come to conduct a three months anthropological fieldwork as part of my M.A. degree (Magister konferens) at Copenhagen University. It was during this visit that I acquired an interest in perceptions of art.

Shortly after I had arrived, Jens Sjørslev, a Danish anthropologist, then working as a Socio-Economic advisor for a development project financed by Danida, asked me and a friend, Reneé Iben, to buy a painting as a gift for one of the engineers at the project. This seemingly simple task caused me immense worry. Would my choice reveal my lack of connoisseurship - I was not familiar with the style of art - or, even worse, be seen as a possible indicator of bad taste?

In the village, various paintings were displayed and when enquiring about the prices we were told that some were better than others - distinctions both of us had difficulties appreciating. To my immense relief the person celebrating his birthday was pleased with our choice but the experience left me wondering about the conceptions I had come across in the village. What notions lay behind the painters' advice on what to buy? Was it simply a matter of business or could they see something of which I was unaware? The task provided the starting point of the present study, which, I believe has enabled me to comprehend at least partly what it was the painters were talking about on that afternoon in 1988.

Before I left London for India in summer 1991, I had spent some time viewing various collections of *patta* paintings. I paid visits to the India Office Library, Victorian and Albert Museum, the ethnographic section of the Museum of Mankind, and the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. In addition Mrs. Elizabeth Sampson was kind enough to introduce me to the varied collection of her late husband Mr. Sampson (former director of the Horniman Museum), which included an Orissa *patta* painting from the beginning of this century.

The majority of my fieldwork was conducted during my second visit to Orissa starting August 1991 and coming to an end 15 months later in November 1992. Although a large part of my data was collected in the village of Raghurājpur, Puri district, the study cannot be classified as a "village study". The rather awkward term "community study" covers more precisely the framework of the project. The term is awkward because the concept of "community" conveys ideas of homogeneity and belonging. In fact, the painters who are the subject of discussion here belong to different *jātis*[23] and come from different places and it is precisely their common

[23] i.e. local endogamous groups.

interest in paintings - the basis for talking about a "community" - which leads to conflicts and the resulting separation.

During my visit in 1988-89, I lived in the household of a Master Craftsman of the village of Raghurājpur, something which had restricted my access to other villagers, some of whom were in conflict with the head of my household. This was the reason why, when I returned to the village for the second time (1991) to conduct anthropological fieldwork, I decided to stay on my own and thus rented a house in the centre of the village. For several reasons this proved to be a problematic decision. The house had been empty for several years and the fact that I wanted to live there on my own was a cause of great concern to the villagers. This decision was viewed as anti-social - no sensible person would voluntarily stay on their own and particularly not a young woman. After six weeks of endless problems I was happy to accept the offer of using a room in the handicraft co-operative. This however lead to other problems and a couple of months after my arrival I decided to move out of the village.

The rest of the time I stayed in the town of Puri, only interrupted by shorter stays in the capital, Bhubaneshwar, and towns of Ganjam and Koraput district in the southern part of Orissa. As no painters in Puri could accommodate me, I lived with an Oriya family who had no relation to my research project.

It was only after I left the village of Raghurājpur that I began to understand the whole network of which the painters of Raghurājpur were only a part. Every single painter household whether in Puri, Bhubaneshwar, Raghurājpur or Dānda Sāhi was related to painter households in each of the other three places. This was more pronounced among painters of the *Chitrakāra jāti* than for painters of other *jātis*[24]. Paintings were continuously exchanged

[24] *Chitrakāra* means "maker of paintings".

between these households often ending up in Raghurājpur or at sale-cum-exhibitions in other states.

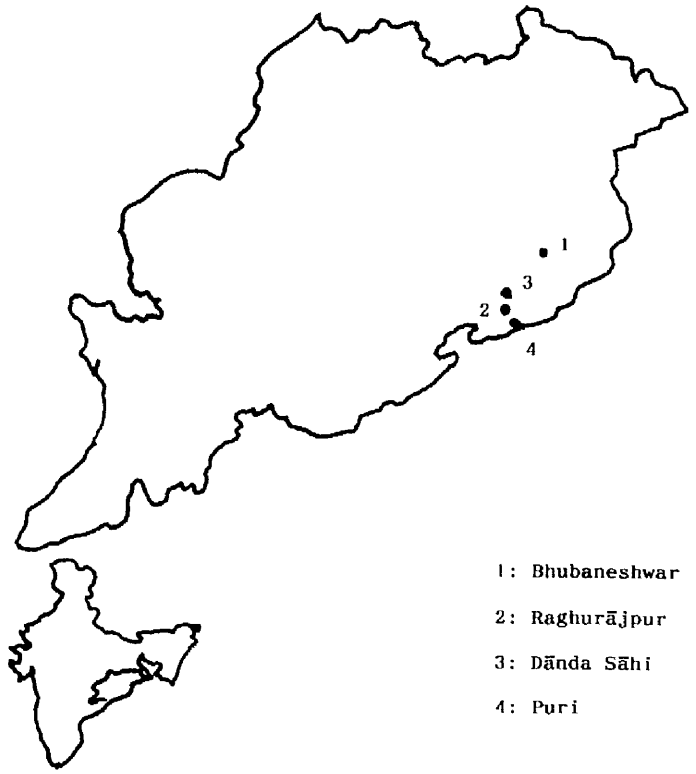
During my fieldwork I also spent time in Calcutta visiting the Indian Museum, Gurusaday Museum, Sir Asutosh Museum and the Victoria Memorial to see their collections of *patta* paintings and wood block prints from Orissa and Bengal. In Delhi I visited the National Museum and the National Handicraft and Handlooms Museum both of which possess Orissan *patta* paintings.

In January 1994 I returned to Orissa for a 6 week visit during which I presented to the painters the model of the art worlds I had developed on the earlier fieldwork. As my analysis inevitably becomes part of this self-same art world, I have found it necessary to accommodate the producers' response to my own theoretical formulations with the aim of doing justice to this interactive process. Their responses to my interpretations thus comprise a crucial part of the theoretical argument and are the subject of discussion in the conclusion.

Chapter 1
Painters of Puri District

The painters who are the subject of this thesis live in the district of Puri, Orissa. They are residing in the town of Puri, the villages of Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi and the capital Bhubaneshwar. The majority of painters in Puri, Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi belong to the painter *jāti* known as *Chitrakāra*, while the painters of Bhubaneshwar are of different *jātis*[1].

Figure 1: Orissa, residency of *patta* painters in Puri district



1 Painters named Mahāranā or Mahāpātra are of *Chitrakāra jāti*.

In the second section of this chapter I will describe the village in which most of my field work was conducted. First, however, I want to depict some of the individual painters who work within networks that stretch over a number of locales.

Section I

The Orisssan *Patta* Painter "Community"

We shall focus on some of the painters who produce *patta* paintings and, in particular, the network of *patta* painters that has evolved around the village of Raghurājpur. It is this village rather than Puri, Dānda Sāhi or Bhubaneshwar that has become known for its production of *patta* paintings. Some of the factors that have played a role in this development are discussed in chapter 2. I place "community" in inverted commas because the term conveys a false sense of homogeneity. In fact competition and conflict make the painters a far from homogenous group.

The complex network creates a confusing mass of data but gives a sense of the intricate links between painters in villages and towns. To present the data in as clear a form as possible I will first introduce the oldest of the painters I worked with and then continue chronologically, with slight variations, to the youngest of the painters. Moreover painters **recurrently** discussed, are marked with a letter and numbers referring to their lineage, i.e. A.1.2. (2nd son of 1st son of painter A)[2]. Occasionally a relation has been added such as A.1.D (daughter of A.1.) or A.1.-s-i-l. (son-in-law of A.1.).

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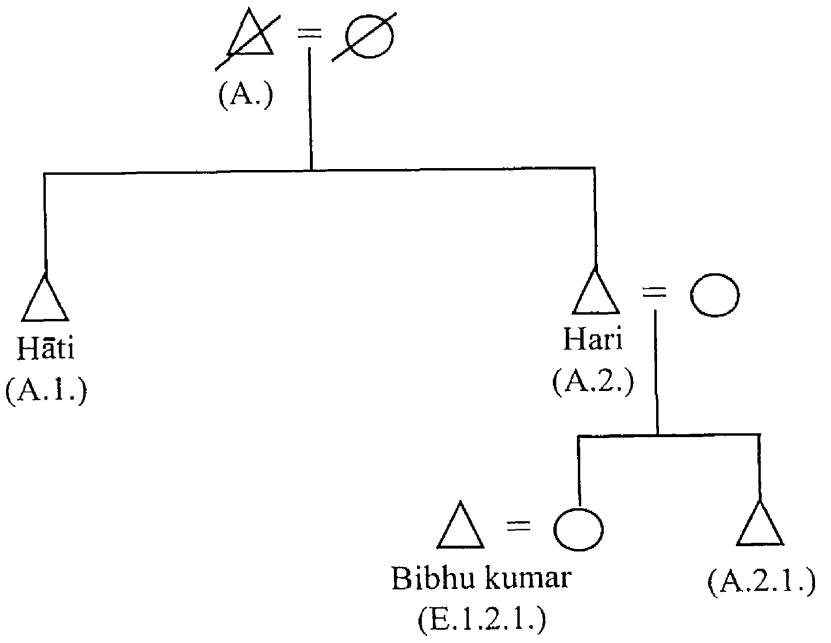
2 I have only mentioned people who occur in the thesis. The numbers do not therefore necessarily indicate the actual position of a son or a daughter in a household. The letter and number system does not convey anything about the family as such but is simply a way of identifying the painters throughout the thesis. A painter referred to as (A.) might be of the same age as one referred to as (B.1.2.) and both might have had forefathers who were painters. Where a single letter appears this simply indicates that I do not discuss the father of this individual, whereas I use a letter **and a number** when referring to the son (or other descendants) of an individual who is also discussed in the thesis.

Ganesh Mahāranā was born in Raghurājpur approximately 1910. In 1991 he was the only man in the village who painted paintings for pilgrims (*jātri pattis*)[3]. In contrast to the 1950s, when some men still painted *jātri pattis*, this task (with this single exception) had become the domain of women for it brought no prestige and little financial reward. His son worked for *Brahmins* as a daily labourer in their betel fields and alternative sources of income were therefore welcome[4]. Ganesh's daughter-in-law made cow dung toys and occasionally worked for another *Chitrakāra* household making paper masks.

Figure 2: Lineage A, close kin of Hātī Mahāranā, Cuttack/Puri



3 In this thesis *jātri patti* denotes cheap and hurridly executed paintings made on paper which, as their name implies, are aimed at pilgrims.

4 See section II pp.74-76 for information on landownership.

Hātī Mahāranā (A.1.), born around 1920, lived in Orissa's former capital Cuttack. In May 1969 Hati's father applied to the Temple Administrator of the *Jagannātha* temple to permit his son to take over the official role as a servant (*sebaka*) for the temple. A notice was published inviting the *sebakas* of the temple and the general public to complain if they had any objections to the choice of *sebaka* (Das 1982:34). In June 1970 the Temple administrator ordered the performance of the ritual of sari tying (*sādhibandhā*), a symbolic acknowledgement of a new *sebaka* and leader (*hākim*) of one of the divisions (*bādas*) of *Chitrakāras*[5]. In the case of a *Chitrakāra* the role as *hākim* entails the responsibility for part of the ritual painting work in the *Jagannātha* temple. When necessary Hātī came to Puri to stay with his younger brother Hari (A.2.) (born approximately 1940) and other relatives who often participated in performing the service.

The two brothers earned the main part of their living doing "*commercial*" work by which they meant painting of sign boards, glass painting and sea shells, the latter aimed at Bengali tourists visiting the seashore. Hari only painted *pattas* when he got specific orders as he disliked spending time trying to find customers for his work.

Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.) was born in Raghurājpur in the 1930s. His life was radically changed when, encouraged by a Polish American woman, Halina Zealey, he decided to stop rehearsing theatre plays in Puri in order to devote himself to *patta* painting[6]. Before she left she gave him an award

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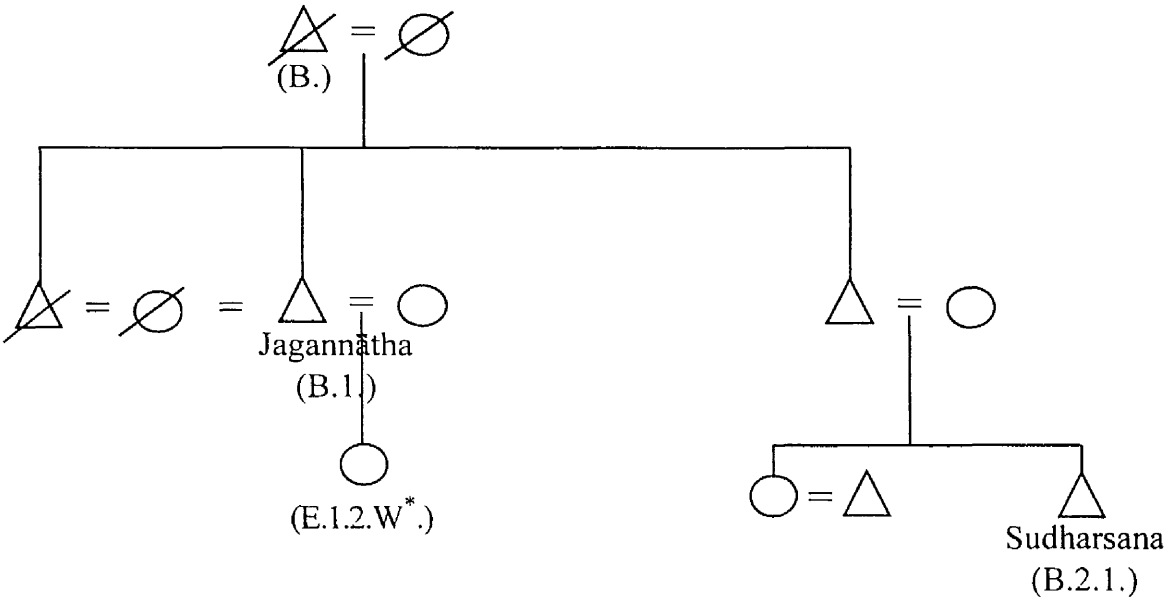
5 Now-a-days there are only two divisions: *Balabhadra bāda* and *Jagannātha bāda*. Occasionally the *Balabhadra* division is referred to as "eighteen-households" (*athara-ghara*) and the *Jagannatha* division as "fourteen-households" (*chauda-ghara*), the origin of these terms are not known. More commonly painters refer to the respective divisions as *Balabhadra kula* and *Jagannātha kula*. *Kula* can be equated with a lineage with a leader (*hākim*) but without a known ancestor. All *Chitrakāras* outside Puri town belong to the *Jagannātha kula* whereas some of the *Chitrakāra* households in Puri belong to the *Balabhadra kula*.

6 Zealey and her role for the "revival" of *patta* paintings are discussed in chapter 2.

Figure 3: Lineage B, close kin of Jagannātha Mahāpātra, Raghurājpur



* Jagannātha's adopted daughter

for a *patta* depicting *Ganesh* in a five headed form[6]. In 1965, twelve years after the departure of Zealey, Jagannātha received the first ever national award to be given to a *patta* painter and thus obtained the title of Master

6 This painting is reproduced in chapter 3, figure 24. The competition for the award is mentioned in chapter 2, p. 112.

Craftsman[8]. This title denotes that a painter is sufficiently skilled to instruct new apprentices in his art.

In the years which followed, Jagannātha has taught several apprentices and until the 1980s he was the painter who had most strongly influenced the style of *patta* painting to be found in the district of Puri.

In 1988-89 Jagannātha Mahāpātra's household in Raghurājpur included at least sixteen members. He lived with his wife, his brother and his wife and their son and daughter. Moreover he had eleven apprentices of different ages some of whom had stayed with Jagannātha for several years. Among the students were Rabindra Mahāpātra (aged 26), his cousin Dinabandhu Mahāpātra (aged 23), Tophāna Mahāranā (aged 23), and Laksmidhara Mahāranā (aged 18). They all ate their meals in Jagannātha's household but several went home to sleep in their respective households. The apprentice group was in constant state of flux as students left to start on their own and new boys came to learn. The students were mainly of the *Chitrakāra jāti* but the group also included boys belonging to other *jātis*. During busy periods Jagannātha called some of his former apprentices to work for a daily salary of Rs. 50[9].

In the dry season, Jagannātha's wife Tikinā prepared canvas (*patti*) often assisted by her husband. *Patti* is only rarely made in the rainy season as the humidity makes it almost impossible to dry. It was also Tikinā who was responsible for the preparation of the red colour *hingula* (cinnabar), one of

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8 Awards can be obtained at national and state level. The former, which is selected by a national rather than a state committee, has most prestige but both types of awards authorise the title of Master Craftsman.

9 In 1994 a student at the beginning of his apprenticeship would get approximately Rs. 60 per month and food while working in his *guru's* house. The salary gradually increases as the student acquires the skills required to do still more of the art. It is the ability to make the sketch (*tipanā*) and do the fine black lines (*saru kalā*) which determines when a painter can be said to be an independent craftsman or "*full kārigara*" as the painters prefer to call it. In 1994 a craftsman at this stage in his career would be paid approximately Rs. 1000-1200 per month when working for his *guru* or Rs. 50 per day.

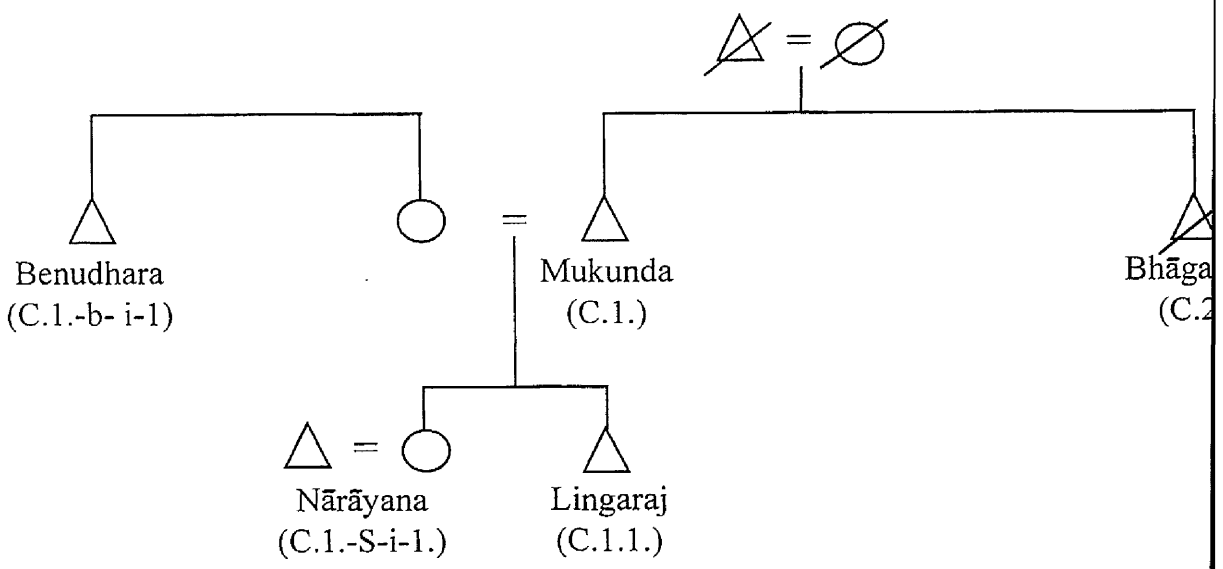
the few traditional colours which are still in use. When Jagannātha did not supervise the work of his apprentices himself, the more experienced students would do so.

In 1994, Jagannātha's household consisted of only seven members, three of whom were apprentices. The older students had left to start on their own, the daughter of the household had been married off, and, for personal reasons, Jagannātha's wife had left to stay with her natal family. Jagannātha had found the departure of Rabindra, Dīnabandhu and Laksmidhara particulary difficult to accept. That was one of the reasons why Jagannātha preferred to call on other former students of his from the neighbouring village of Dānda Sāhi when he required assistance.

Jagannātha's first apprentices were the late Bhāgabata Mahāranā (C.2.) and Benudhara Mahāpātra (C.1.-b-i-l.) of whom we shall hear more later. Although they both evolved distinct styles of their own after leaving their *guru*, traces of his style are still obvious in Benudhara's paintings. Until his death in 1987 Bhagabatā taught in the State Handicraft Design Centre (Handicraft Complex) and, perhaps, more important in his home in Bhubaneshwar[10].

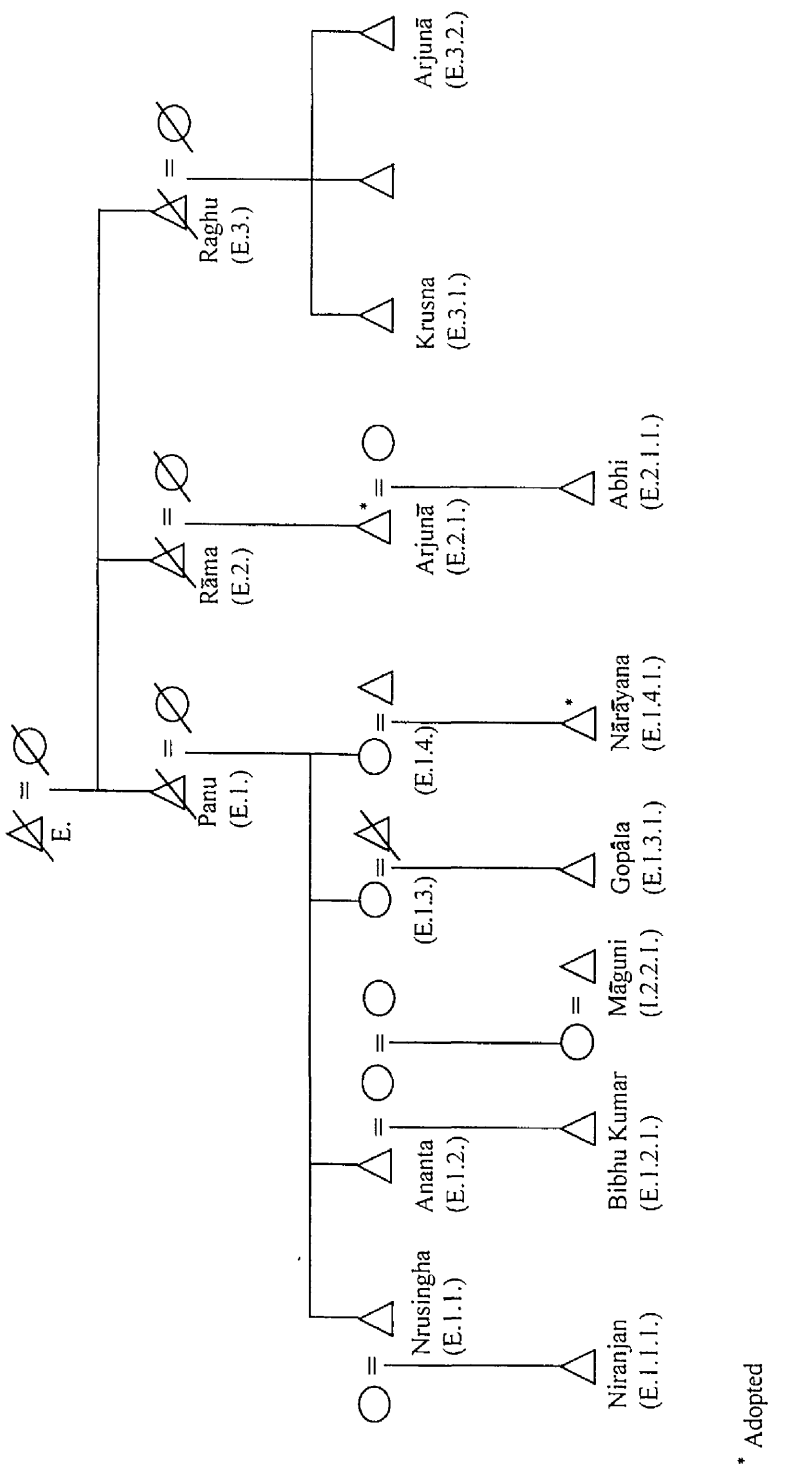
10 It is generally agreed amongst painters that thorough training can be obtained only in the home of a *guru*. When painters nevertheless attend courses in official training institutions it is to obtain certificates. For information on the Handicraft Complex see chapter 6, pp. 363-65.

Figure 4: Lineage C, close kin of Bhāgabata Mahāranā



Gokul Bihari Patnaik (D.) from the *Khandāyatta* (farmer) *jāti* was born in the late 1930s. He was educated at Lucknow Art College and taught himself traditional *patta* painting before he joined the Training Centre as an

Figure 5: Lineage E, close kin of Nrusingha Mahāranā[11]



11 This extended lineage illustrates a common example of a painters' *kutumba*, that is blood relatives through the male lineage.

instructor in the art[12]. After he retired in 1990 he turned his home into an *āshrama* to let his students live with him. His apprentices had all completed the two year training course in the Training Centre before they came to him, but had not, in Gokul's opinion, learned anything of value.

Nrusingha Mahāranā (E.1.1.) lived with his wife, daughter, and two sons in Dānda Sāhi where he was born in approximately 1935[13]. He and his younger brother were taught *patta* painting by their father Panu Mahāranā (E.1.), an acknowledged painter at his time. The oldest son, Nrusingha had taken over his father's work for *Brahmins* and temples and earned an income by painting on ritual occasions.

Due to Nrusingha's deteriorating eyesight, his son, Niranjana (E.1.1.1.), gradually took over painting *pattas*, thereby providing the main income of the household. He specialised in large (approximately 5 x 3 feet) and relatively rough "story paintings" which could be made and sold relatively quickly to some of the middlemen in Raghurājpur[14].

Ananta Mahāranā (E.1.2.), younger brother of Nrusingha Mahārāna, was born in Dānda Sāhi in approximately 1940. Unlike his older brother, Ananta did not do any ritual work for *Brahmins* and temples but earned his living painting for tourists. Like Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.) in Raghurājpur, Ananta had a studio in which he worked with and instructed his apprentices.

In 1991 Ananta had one apprentice staying with him and in addition taught his youngest son and his grandchild (a son of Ananta's oldest son). He had decided against sending his sons to the Training Centre in Bhubaneshwar

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12 For information on the Training Centre see chapter 6, pp. 364-367.

13 His eldest son and his daughter were both almost completely blind and consequently depended upon their father and younger brother.

14 The term "story paintings" is explained and discussed in chapter 3.

as he felt they would be better off learning from him. His two wives[15], daughters, and daughter-in-law were only rarely seen painting, but were responsible for preparing the *patti*.

Ananta occasionally got an order from the government emporium Utkalikā, but in general he sold the paintings made in the household to the *Brahmin*, Laksmidhara Pandā, from Dānda Sāhi. The latter supplemented his meagre income from his services in temples by buying paintings from artists in Dānda Sāhi and Raghurājpur and selling them on the beach in Puri.

Benudhara Mahāpātra (C.1.-b-i-l.) was born in Raghurājpur in the early 1940s and was, as mentioned, one of the first apprentices of Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.). Benudhara began to teach *patta* painting at the Training Centre in 1966, the year before he received a national award and thus acquired the title of Master Craftsman. When he got the job he shifted from the village of Raghurājpur to settle with his closest family in Bhubaneshwar. Along with other *patta* painters he lived in the old part of town in the vicinity of the Lingarāj temple.

The many years of teaching had not given Benudhara faith in the Training Centre as an institution. In his opinion students generally learned half heartedly, chiefly motivated by financial considerations[16]. An alternative to the official institution was, according to Benudhara, to pay Master Craftsmen to let students stay with them for a period of five to six years.

Bābājī Mahāranā (F.), born approximately 1945, lived in Raghurājpur in the household in which his wife was born[17]. The couple made a living

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15 When Ananta married his second wife he was ostracised by his *jati* until he had paid a fine to the *Chitrakāra* caste council.

16 Students get monthly stipends during the two year course at the Training Centre.

17 In a society in which viri local residence is the dominant practice this was uncommon. The reason was that his mother-in-law had no sons and consequently no one to provide for her.

painting *Jagannātha, Balabhadra* and *Subhadrā* on *patti* with or without the *Jagannātha* temple[18]. All their paintings were sold, without exception, to Bābājī's *guru*, Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.), who offered his guidance for more complex paintings.

Likewise Lakshmana Mahāranā, of Bābājī's age group, sold all his paintings (*thiā badhiās*) to Jagannātha (B.1.), his *guru*, who lived across the lane from Lakshmana. He only painted *pattas* when *Jagannātha* gave him an order and, in general he, his wife, and his daughter made a living making paper masks.

Binod Mahāranā (G.), born in 1945, grew up in *Chitrakāra* lane (*sāhi*) in Puri and was taught *patta* painting by his grandfather (father's father). Later he decided to train in fine art under the artist Asit Mukhārjee. He did not, however, leave the Orissan traditional art forms altogether but used them as a base for creating new ways of expressing well known themes.

When he was employed in the Training Centre as an instructor in palm leaf carving he moved with his family to a spacious bungalow in Bhubaneshwar. As a matter of principle Binod never accepted more than one private apprentice at the time. In his opinion several apprentices are incompatible with conscientious coaching.

In 1974 Binod received a national award for a palm leaf design, followed by a state award in 1978. Furthermore, the Lalit Kala Akademy, among other institutions, has recognized Binod's innovative contributions with an award. Unlike the bodies granting national and state awards, innovation is an aspect the Akademy considers very important. In 1987 Binod travelled to the Festival of India in Boston and demonstrated palm leaf carving. Although he teaches palm leaf carving rather than *patta* painting in the

18 When painted with the temple the motif is known as *thiā badhiā* (see chapter 3, figures 11,23,and 29).

Training Centre he is, beyond doubt, the painter who has most significantly influenced the style of *patta* painting in the 1980s and 1990s[19].

Another painter who has increasingly influenced the style of *patta* painting is Bijoy Kumar Parida (H.) from Bhubaneshwar, born approximately 1945. He was taught by his *guru* Gokul Bihari Patnaik (D.) and was therefore familiar with perspective and shadow. Bijoy introduced these elements into his *patta* paintings and they have become increasingly popular[20]. In late 1993 the Orissan Minister of Industries, Dilip Roy, ordered a painting on raw silk or tassar (*mathā*) for his new luxury hotel in Puri, a work of 8 x 4 feet for which Bijoy received Rs. 10,000[21]. Like his *guru*, Bijoy worked mainly on *tassar* to escape the time consuming process of preparing *patti* for his paintings.

Arjunā Mahāranā (E.2.1.) was born 1947 and lived, until his premature death in 1993, in Dānda Sāhi with his wife and their three sons and three daughters. Apart from producing paper masks and papier mâché toys, his wife assisted Arjunā by preparing the *patti* on which Arjunā and his oldest son Abhi (E.2.1.1.) painted.

Arjunā was taught by his father Rāma Mahāranā (E.2.) long before painters began to send their sons to the government's Training Centre. It was Rāma and his brothers Pānu (E.1.) and Raghu (E.3.) who in 1950 had impressed a Polish American couple, the Zealys, with their paintings in an encounter which was the beginning of a "revival" of the *patta* painting tradition (this is the subject of chapter 2).

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19 See chapter 3, figures 34,38, and 38b for reproductions of Binod's work, chapter 5 p. 357, and chapter 6 pp. 367-68 for discussions of his influence.

20 An example of his work has been reproduced in chapter 3, figure 30.

21 The hotel is the personal property of the Minister.

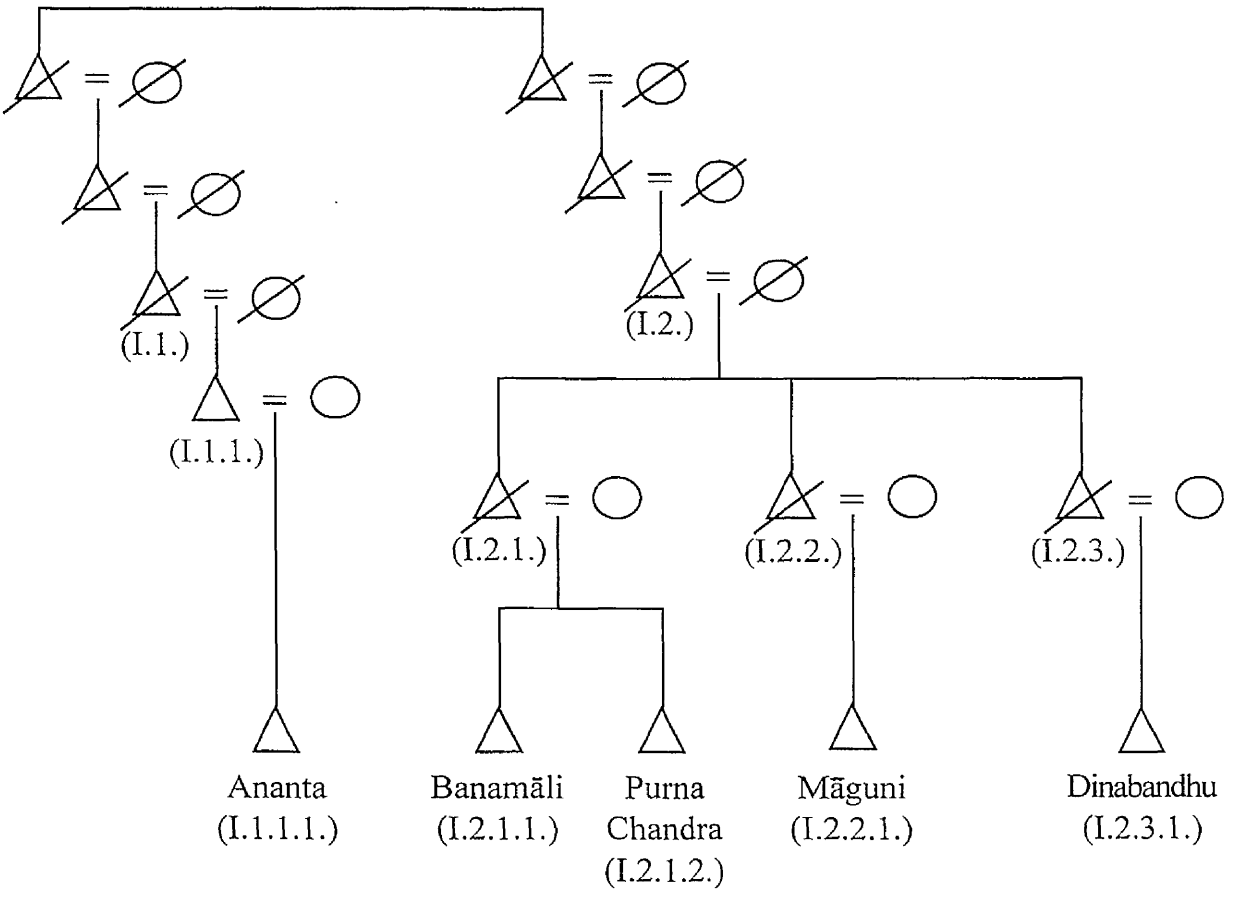
Unlike the majority of painters in Raghurājpur, Arjunā decided to personally teach his son Abhi rather than sending him to the Training Centre in Bhubaneshwar. With the exception of one household which considered Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.) from Raghurājpur its *guru*, the younger generation of painters in Dānda Sāhi had all been taught by Arjunā and his cousin Ananta Mahāranā (E.1.2.). Whereas the latter had a studio, known as *the office*, in which he worked with and instructed his apprentices, Arjunā offered his guidance on an informal basis by criticising the work brought by less experienced painters. Arjunā's regular apprentices were his son and a nephew of Arjunā's wife.

In 1974 Arjunā got a state award followed by a national award in 1984-85. These were followed by several invitations to work at The National Handicraft and Handlooms Museum in Delhi, to participate in some of the Festival of India arrangements (briefly discussed in chapter 6), as well as other exhibitions taking place abroad. Arjunā Mahāranā has also demonstrated *patta* painting in Australia (an exhibition arranged by the Crafts Council of Australia, 1985), the Soviet Union (1986-87) and France (1991, 1993). At the time of his death, Arjunā did not have any apprentices except for his son, because of, among other reasons, his frequent journeys to Delhi and occasional travel abroad.

During the weeks leading up to a trip in Delhi, Arjunā ordered paintings from artists in Puri, Bhubaneshwar and occasionally also Raghurājpur so that he would have as big a collection of paintings as possible. His travels gave Arjunā ample opportunity to sell his own paintings as well as those of other painters and at the time of his death Arjunā was wealthy compared to other painters in Dānda Sāhi and Raghurājpur. Though, in 1991, Arjunā still had hereditary relations with different patrons, he did not paint himself but sent his son. Arjunā did not consider *sebā* work fitting for a Master Craftsman.

Nārāyana Mahāranā (E.1.4.1) was born in Puri approximately 1950 and adopted by his mother's father, who was then *hākim* of the *Jagannātha kula*[22]. In 1968 (*hākim*) Nārāyana took over the *sebā* of his grandfather. Nārāyana had never been a skilled painter but, nevertheless, carried out his *sebā* for the Jagannātha ṭemple, as well as painting for other temples and *Brahmin* households. The only *patta* paintings Nārāyana ever painted were the ones made for religious purposes. He was not skilled enough to paint the intricate designs demanded in the wider market and consequently had difficulties supporting his wife and children.

Figure 6: Lineage I, Distant kin of Dīnabandhu Mahāpātra



22 There are two painters in this thesis with the name Nārāyana Mahāranā. To avoid confusion, one will therefore be referred to as *hākim* Nārāyana.

Ananta Mahāpātra (I.1.1.1.) lived with his wife Pramilla in Raghurājpur where he was born approximately 1950. While Ananta mainly engraved palm leaves, Pramilla painted *pattas* of a relatively small size (approximately 6" x 8"). There were several reasons why they did not make bigger paintings. Firstly they were always short of money and needed to make constant sales. They therefore sold mainly through the *Brahmin* Laksmidhara Pandā from Dānda Sāhi who regularly came to collect paintings to sell on the Puri beach. Occasionally local artists or middlemen took some of their paintings before going on a business trip and, when desperate, Ananta would ask the local middleman Bānāmbara Nāyaka for an advance. Ananta occasionally had apprentices, some more serious than others, but none of them had stayed for more than a couple of years. They did not stay in Ananta's household as they were generally from Raghurājpur. In 1991 he taught the children of the middleman Bānāmbara Nāyaka but, according to Ananta, they were not serious and came only irregularly. They did, however, occasionally bring their *guru* a gift.

Ananta had an extra income of approximately Rs. 100 per year for assisting his brother-in-law when he painted for ritual purposes. Ananta's son spent his days at school or playing in the village and had no interest in painting. He liked spending money and the continuing financial problems at home made him realise that life as an unrecognised painter was too difficult for his liking. He had therefore, with the support of his parents, decided not to become a painter.

Māguni Mahāpātra (I.2.2.1.), born in Raghurājpur in approximately 1953, lived with his step-mother, his wife Manju, and four children in a small house consisting of two rooms separated by an open kitchen. Māguni had enroled in the Training Centre in 1969 where he had been taught by Benudhara Mahāpātra (C.1.-b-i-1.). Moreover he had been a private student of Bhāgabata Mahāranā (C.2.).

Manju's production of paper masks provided for the most basic, daily necessities of the household. Her earnings and the money gained from selling the paintings made by Māguni's apprentice, permitted Māguni to spend long hours on a single *patta*. Because of stiff competition he often tried to develop new decorative patterns to fill out the background, and his paintings became increasingly more detailed, a common tendency amongst the painters of Raghurājpur.

In 1985, Māguni took a boy from the village, Pramad Kumar Das of goldsmith (*Baniā*) *jāti*, as an apprentice and taught him till 1990. Already within the first year of an apprenticeship, a student can begin to work for his *guru* doing the easier tasks of *patta* painting. By the time Pramad left Māguni he could almost paint a *patta* from beginning to end.

Gopāla Mahāranā (E.1.3.1.) was Māguni Mahāpātra's neighbour and a few years his junior. Gopāla began as an apprentice of the elder brother of Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.) and later shifted to Gopāla's mother's brother, Ananta Mahāranā (E.1.2.), from Dānda Sāhi. Although Gopāla had not (yet) received an award he described himself as a Master Craftsman on the little signboard on his veranda advertising paintings for sale.

In 1992 he had two apprentices who came to work in his household every day. One of them, Pramad Kumar Das, was, as mentioned above, a former student of Māguni[23]. The other *Brahmin* student was a novice from a neighbouring village. In common with other people he had decided to learn a craft rather than risk unemployment. Since it was inconvenient to travel back and forth from his home during the day, he took his meals in Gopāla's household. As with other painters, Gopāla Mahāranā's output was dependent on a division of labour among his students and his kin.

23 When I revisited Raghurājpur in 1994, Pramad Kumar worked as an independent craftsman (after nine years of training).

The border work and decoration with white (*sankhapatā*) was undertaken by Gopāla's students rather than his wife who had not yet learned how to paint *patta*. On the rare occasions when she was not engaged with household tasks, she would make masks, a skill she had been taught in her natal home. Her mother-in-law Prema occasionally painted *jātri pattis*.

Nārāyana Mahāranā (C.1.-s-i-l), born approximately 1957, resided in his natal home in the vicinity of the *Jagannātha* temple. He lived with his mother, a daughter from a previous marriage, his wife and their four children, his four younger brothers, and the wife and two children of one of these brothers. His sister-in-law Ranju was the sister of Māguni Mahāpātra (I.2.2.1.), one of the people who provided Nārāyana with intimate ties to the village of Raghurājpur.

Nārāyana was taught *patta* painting by his father and never attended a course in the government Training Centre. He was what the painters refer to as a "real craftsman" (*prakruta kārigara*), by which they mean a craftsman who can make several different types of crafts such as the clay figures (*murtī*) used in *pujā*, stone carvings (*murtīs*) and *patta* painting. Despite his competence, Nārāyana has not so far received any official recognition for his skill in the form of an award and this is one of his profound regrets.

Nārāyana was strongly influenced by the late Bhāgabata Mahāranā (C.2.) whose inventive nature Nārāyana admired. Nārāyana often recounted how Bhāgabata brought new life to the art of *patta* painting by introducing images found, for example, in old palm leaves. Motifs which originated in a three month workshop on *patta* painting held at the B.K. Art College at Bhubaneshwar in 1987 could also be seen in Nārāyana's production. He was one of two traditional *patta* painters who were asked to work with college students with the aim to develop new motifs on the basis of old murals and palm leaves.

For the sale of his paintings, as well as for new orders, Nārāyana depended upon his former brother-in-law Lingarāj Mahāranā (C.1.1.) from Raghurājpur[24]. He was aware that he would have got more for his paintings if he sold them directly, but did not mind the loss as long as he did not have to spend his time seeking customers. The agreement between the two was, in other words, mutually beneficial.

As the eldest brother, Nārāyana had, at his fathers' death, taken over the responsibility of the hereditary work for *Brahmins* and temples. Nārāyana took pride in participating as little as possible in this work which he did not consider suitable for "big craftsmen" (*bada kārigara*). He sent his brothers to execute the task and would himself prefer to show up only at the beginning and at the very last stage of the work. When *Brahmin* households brought their paintings in preparation for a *pujā*, it was Nārāyana's mother and brothers who repainted the images. Nārāyana himself only participated if it was a particularly well paid order.

Brajakishare Das was born in Puri in approximately 1958. He considered three painters his *gurus*, one of whom was his grandfather and the other Hātī Mahāranā (A.1.). In 1986, the year after he received a state award for a *patta* painting depicting the Nine Planets, he was employed as a teacher in the Handicraft Complex in Bhubaneshwar[25]. Like some other painters Brajakishare found that the force of the late Bhāgabata Mahāranā (C.2.) lay in his creativity and wit rather than his skill as a craftsman. In 1994 he still lived in Puri with his wife and children and commuted daily to his office in Bhubaneshwar.

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24 Nārāyana's first wife, sister of Lingarāj, died a few years after their marriage.

25 The painting depicting The Nine Planets is reproduced in chapter 3, figure 50. Students who complete satisfactorily their training course at the Training Centre are permitted to continue their apprenticeship at the Handicraft Complex. For more information on these institutions see chapter 6.

Dīnabandhu Mahāpātra (I.2.3.1.) was born in Raghurājpur in 1959 but shifted to Bhubaneshwar in 1987 when he was employed in the Training Centre as an instructor in *patta* painting. Dīnabandhu had received his initial training in this Training Centre and continued his training privately under Bhāgabata Mahāranā (C.2.) and Benudhara Mahāpātra (C.1.-b-i-l.). In 1979 he received a national award and thus acquired the title of Master Craftsman.

When he was not teaching, he painted with the assistance of two apprentices who were both former students from the Training Centre. At weekends he brought the resulting paintings to his household in Raghurājpur where his cousins, the Master Craftsman Banamālī Mahāpātra (I.2.1.1.) and his younger brother Purna Chandra (I.2.1.2.) sold them to visiting tourists. Dīnabandhu's wife and mother, who had stayed behind when Dīnabandhu moved to Bhubaneshwar, never had anything to do with the sale of paintings. His wife Sunālatā did not know the prizes of paintings and as far as she was concerned she was not able to estimate them.

Sunālatā, her mother-in-law and their three daughters shared a house with another household comprised of Dīnabandhu's cousins, their mother, their wives and children[26]. Apart from the daily household tasks the women of the households also worked as painters, with the exception of the youngest daughter-in-law who had yet to learn the skill.

The women prepared the *patti* and assisted in the painting by making the borders and decorating the background with petals. It was mainly the older women (the mothers of Dīnabandhu and Banamālī) who painted *jātri pattis*, generally sold to pilgrims in Puri or to tourists visiting the village. Dīnabandhu had taught his wife to paint *pattas* and she was one of three

26 To an outsider the households will appear to be one, the only factor separating one from the other being the two hearths.

women in the village who could paint a *patta* independently. When wishing to make a relatively complex design, however, she asked Dīnabandhu to make a sketch.

Parikshita Mahāranā (J.1.), born in Raghurājpur in 1963, was one of the painters who decided to move to Bhubaneshwar to avoid the stiff competition and consequent tension in Raghurājpur. He was introduced to the painting of masks and wooden figures in his natal home but as far as *patta* painting was concerned he considered Bhāgabata Mahāranā (C.2.) and Binod Mahāranā (G.) his *gurus*. Parikshita taught his younger brother Kailasha (J.2.) *patta* painting and unlike his brother, Kailasha decided to stay on in Raghurājpur.

Kālucharana Bārika (K.), born in approximately 1962, was the first in his family, of farmer (*Chasā*) *jāti*, to become a painter. One of the reasons he mentioned as important in reaching this decision was a painter's ability to work at home and thus be with his family. This avoided the need to leave the village in search of work. Kālucharana was the eldest son of eight siblings. His father worked on their one acre of land growing betel and also as a daily labourer.

Kālucharana spent six years as an apprentice of Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.). In 1992 Kālucharana's younger brother started as an apprentice to Ananta Mahāpātra (I.1.1.1.) from Raghurājpur. One would expect that Kālucharana would send him to his former *guru* Jagannātha, but the relationship between the two households had become increasingly strained after Kālucharana decided to work independently.

When Sarat Chandra Swain (L.), born in approximately 1963 (also of *Chasā jāti*) was 12 years old he decided to begin as an apprentice to Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.). In 1991 he explained that his decision was prompted by his dislike of heat and mud (neither of which a farmer can escape) and a

wish to earn a reasonable salary. Sarat had seen how Jagannātha's household had prospered through the tourist trade and he had only one acre of land on which to farm. Like Kālucharana, Sarat Chandra spent six years apprenticed to Jagannātha Mahāpātra and later continued to work for his *guru* on a monthly basis[27]. In 1991 Sarat Chandra set up a group with Rabindra Mahāranā, Dīnabandhu Mahāranā and Lakshmidhara Mahāranā, all former students of Jagannātha.

Lingarāj Mahāranā (C.1.1.), born in Raghurājpur in approximately 1963, had begun his tutelage in the Training Centre in 1980 under his father's younger brother Bhāgabata Mahāranā (C.2.) with whom he lived during the three years he spent in Bhubaneshwar. In the late 1980s Lingarāj's household in Raghurājpur made a living painting paper masks, wooden figures and an occasional *patta*. Lingarāj's mother and wife made the *patti*, the paper masks, and gave the figures a preliminary coat of white paint before they were painted by Lingarāj and his father Mukunda.

In the early 1990s Lingarāj had fully developed his talent as a middleman and earned the majority of the household's income by buying and selling the *pattas* made by other painters. His main supplier was his former brother-in-law Nārāyana Mahāranā (C.1.-s-i-l) from Puri but he also sold for several other painters, the most common suppliers being Niranjana Mahāranā (E.1.1.1.) (Dānda Sāhi), Māguni Mahāpātra (I.2.2.1.) (Raghurājpur), Parikshita Mahāranā (J.1.) (Bhubaneshwar), and Ramesh Mahāranā (apprentice of G.) - Lingarāj's wife's mother's brother - from Puri.

Though he had no financial need, Lingarāj continued to carry out hereditary work for *Brahmins* and temples. Among other tasks, he repainted *Krishna*

27 During the last part of his apprenticeship he was paid Rs. 200-300 a month. In 1991 he got Rs. 750 per month working for his former *guru* from 10 a.m. till 4 p.m. He had, moreover, an income from the paintings he made at home while he was not working for the Master Craftsman.

patās in the temples of *Raghunatha* (*Rāma*) and *Rādhamohana* (*Krishna*) in Raghurājpur at *Krishna janma* (*Bhadraba krusna pakhya*), for which he got 8 coconuts[28]. In contrast to a *patta* made on canvas, a *patā* is a painted wooden plaque made for the purpose of worship[29].

Biranchi Das (M.) of *Chasā jāti* began to paint as a child when he saw *Chitrakāras* at work in his village Dānda Sāhi. He joined the other boys working in Ananta Mahāranā's studio and, realising that he was doing reasonably well, decided to become Ananta's apprentice.

In the early 1990s Biranchi relied increasingly on Jagannātha Mahāpātra's (B.1.) household for the sale of his paintings. Jagannātha often gave Biranchi orders to carry out at home, but occasionally he was asked to come to the household of the Master Craftsman to work in his studio. Jagannātha Mahāpātra frequently commented that his "studio" felt empty after several of his students had left their *guru*. By the end of 1993 Biranchi wished to avoid the Dānda Sāhi painters' dependency on Raghurājpur for the sale of their paintings and decided to shift to Bhubaneshwar.

Baraju Mahāranā (N.1.), of Biranchi's age, grew up in Dānda Sāhi. Initially he was taught painting by his father, Gunu (N.), and often assisted him in his hereditary work for *Brahmin* patrons and temples. At some point, however, Baraju chose to be apprenticed to Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.) in Raghurājpur. Baraju stayed with his *guru* for several years and has continued to work for him after completing his apprenticeship. Baraju's two younger brothers also considered Jagannātha Mahāpātra their *guru* although Baraju has been mainly responsible for their instruction. Jagannātha not only influenced them through their brother Baraju, but also continued to give them advice and "correct" their paintings when they came to work for

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28 The yearly cycle of ritual painting is described in chapter 4.

29 For a detailed explanation of the difference between a *patta* and a *pātas* see chapter 3, section III. It should be noted that some *pattas*, the most obvious being the *Anasara pattas* discussed in chapter 4, are made for the purpose of worship.

him. This was mainly during the cold season when an influx of foreign tourists resulted in an increased demand for paintings. Usually Baraju's mother prepared the *patti* or painted *jātri pattis*, and his wife and children assisted him painting borders and making background decoration.

Baraju's decision to become Jagannātha Mahāpātra's apprentice did not mean that Baraju gave up his traditional work as a *Chitrakāra*. The majority of ritual hereditary work conveniently takes place outside the tourist season (November-February) and provides an alternative source of income during the difficult periods when the sale to foreign tourists is low.

Mamatā Behera (O.), born 1964, of fisherman (*Keuta*) *jāti* came from one of the neighbouring villages to Raghurājpur with her husband in the late 1980s. In 1987 she participated in a *patta* painting course offered by the Government to Scheduled Caste women which was taught by Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.). After the one year course came to an end, Mamatā continued to work for her *guru* and in 1992 she earned approximately Rs. 20 per day - a substantial addition to her husband's fluctuating income as a daily labourer[30]. In 1992 she still depended upon her *guru* for the execution of sketches. The agreement was that Mamatā collected the *patti*, on which Jagannātha had drawn a sketch, painted it in her home and then returned the finished painting to her *guru*. In 1992 she was paid 30 n.p. per square inch, a system of payment adopted by the government outlet Utkalikā which painters replicated at a local level[31].

In 1994 Ramesh Mahāranā was approximately 28 years old. He was one of the few painters apprenticed by Binod Mahāranā (G) in Bhubaneshwar. After he completed his apprenticeship in the late 1980s he returned to his

30 See the second section of this chapter for information on salaries for daily labourers.

31 In 1994 Jagannātha paid Mamatā 60 n.p. per square inch acknowledging her increased skill.

natal home in Puri to begin working independently. He often got orders from Dīnabandhu Mahāpātra (I.2.3.1.) when he did not himself have time to execute an order for a painting of high or relatively high quality[32]. With the exception of his cousin Māguni Mahāpātra (I.2.2.1.) and Arjunā Mahāranā (E.2.1.) from Dānda Sāhi, Dīnabandhu never ordered paintings from any of the painters from the villages as he did not consider them sufficiently skilled to carry out an order of high quality.

Bibhu Kumar (E.1.2.1.), son of Ananta Mahāranā, was born in Dānda Sāhi in approximately 1965. He gradually took greater responsibility and in 1991 it was generally Bibhu rather than his father who supervised the apprentices. It was also Bibhu who brought paintings to Raghurājpur when his household had received an order from Lingarāj Mahāranā (C.1.1.) or, more rarely, Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.). One of Ananta's wives was Jagannātha's adopted daughter and consequently he enjoyed a special status in the household.

In Raghurājpur, Bibhu always paid a visit to his sister who was married to Māguni Mahāpātra (I.2.2.1.). Marriage is, of course, one of the ties which often brings two households close together unless the physical distance makes frequent interaction difficult. After Bibhu's marriage to Sita he would frequently drop in at the house of his father-in-law Hari Mahāranā (A.2.) in Puri.

Having provided this detailed information on selected painters in Puri district we shall now concentrate on one of the two villages in which *pattas* are produced.

32 The general criteria of quality amongst the painters are such aspects as the flow and fineness of lines, proportions, poses, and the balance of colours (see chapter 5).

Section II

The Village of Raghurājpur and its Environment

The second part of this chapter focuses on the village of Raghurājpur which is popularly conceived as the place of origin of *patta* paintings[33]. It is this village and its painters, rather than the painters of Dānda Sāhi, Puri or Bhubaneshwar, which in the contemporary (1991-92) local tourist guides is promoted as the place to visit if one has an interest in traditional Orissan *patta* paintings[34]. In the 1950s it was Dānda Sāhi, rather than Raghurājpur which was known to outsiders: today this relation has been reversed and Dānda Sāhi is now practically forgotten.

I have chosen to focus on Raghurājpur rather than Bhubaneshwar (which contains several generally more skilled painters) because of the central role the village has come to play in the lives of *patta* painters in the wider region. Raghurājpur is moreover the natal village of the majority of the painters who have settled in Bhubaneshwar. This section explores the role Raghurājpur's official status, as a recognised craft village, has played in the social life of the village.

Raghurājpur is a hamlet of the Revenue Village (*maujā*) of Jānakādeipur[35] which is under Chandanpur Police Station in Puri district[36]. Chandanpur

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33 When realising my interest in *pattas* government employees invariably told me to visit Raghurājpur which they described as "the place of origin of the paintings". According to Williams Raghurājpur "may be regarded as the home of the *paṭa* [sic] tradition" (1988:5).

34 Raghurājpur is also mentioned in Lonely Planet's Travel Survival Kit (1993:495).

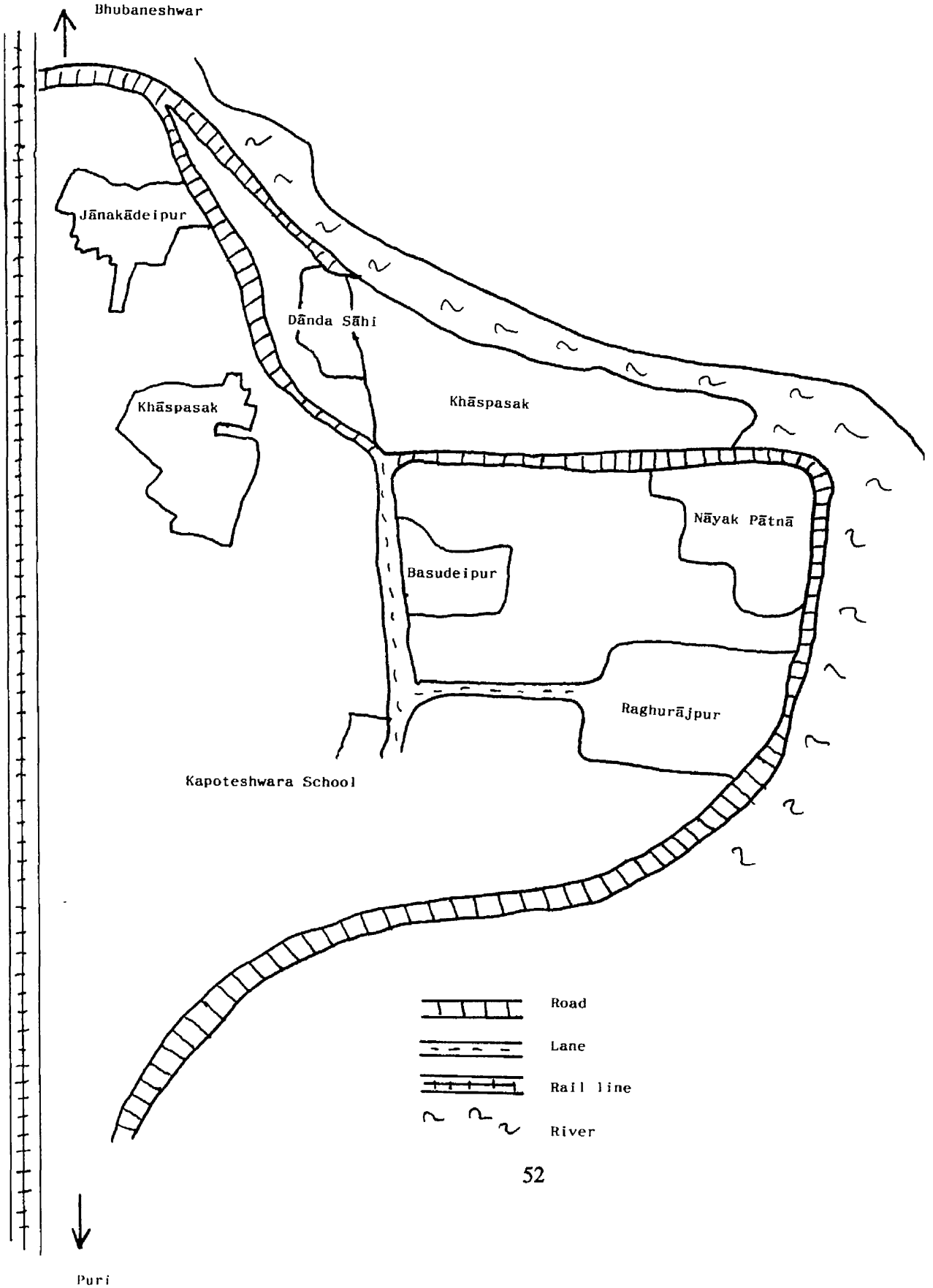
35 Jānakādeipur *maujā* consists of 7 villages: Raghurājpur, one of the two Dānda sāhis, Nāyak Pātnā, Khāspasāk, Jānakādeipur, Utan patna, and Dāsgobā.

36 The Indian local administrative system is two-tiered. The Judicial and Revenue collecting section of the government contains the following administrative units: District - Tahasil - Police Stations (PS) - Revenue Villages (RV). The administrative units of the section of the government are: District - Development Block (Block) - *Grāma Panchāyat* (GP). The village of Raghurājpur belongs to the Malatipatpur *Grāma Panchāyat*.

is situated twelve kilometres from the pilgrim centre of Puri on the highway to Bhubaneshwar. It is well connected to Puri and Bhubaneshwar with regular buses stopping in the town and a less frequent train service on the South Eastern Railway (see figure 7).

The town is the centre for several hamlets - such as Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi - of the so called *Shāsana Brahmin* villages which I will describe in more detail below. Disputes which have not been settled in the villages end up in the ever growing pile of papers at the local police station. Fruit, vegetables, fish, sweets, soda water, the intoxicant *ganjei*, colour, brushes, pencils, small black boards and steel utensils, among other items, are sold in the stalls at the market. The post office is open irregularly and a postman delivers letters in the nearby hamlets, when he has accumulated a sufficient number to make it worthwhile. An owner of a "hotel" which offers "ready meals" has invested in a phone, which has made it possible to call people in the capital. A man has set up a stall for the repair of cycles, another has specialised in scooters. Recently (1991) a son-in-law of the Master Craftsman Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.) from Raghurājpur, has established himself as one of several tailors in Chandanpur. He occasionally stitches a pair of trousers but the main purpose of positioning his stall by the lane leading from Chandanpur towards Raghurājpur, is to keep an eye out for potential customers for paintings.

Figure 7: Raghurājpur and its connection to other villages and the towns of Puri and Bhubaneshwar



Only two kilometres from Chandanpur, the small village of Raghurājpur is situated on the southern bank of the river Bhargavi[37]. Except during heavy monsoon rains it is possible to cover the distance to the village by car but villagers walk or cycle. The close proximity to the railway, where a few trains halt every day, and the highway give the villagers relatively easy access to Puri and Bhubaneshwar.

It is not only the road which links these villages to the world outside. In 1992 three households in Raghurājpur had televisions[38]. Every Sunday afternoon during the last couple of years these houses have been crowded with villagers who wanted initially to see the Doordarshan serialisation of the *Rāmāyana* and some years later the *Mahābhārata*. To a lesser extent people came to hear news items. A few people possessed their own radios and for those who did not, there was one available at the local library in Raghurājpur. Hindi film songs were more popular than news with most villagers. The people who were interested in the world outside Raghurājpur - these were mainly older and younger men[39] - went to the tea stalls in Chandanpur where someone might convey the latest news.

Communication networks thus connect the village with the wider area. However, ties of affinity are also an important factor, necessitating many

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37 During my stay in Raghurājpur the *Chitrakāra* Kunja Mahāranā often told me the legend of the origin of his village: "A king called Sivi came to this area and established the temple Kapoteshwara. At that time the *Visnu* avatar *Rāmachandra* also came to this area and stayed as a guest in the *āshrama* of a sage called Bhrugu. *Rāmachandra* went to see the village nearby and was impressed with the art (*kalā*) and literature (*sahitya*) he found there. The art he saw was a statue (*murti*) of *Raghunatha* made by *Chitrakāras*. He therefore decided to call the village Raghurājpur. However, *Sītā* was disappointed because he gave the village his own name, rather than hers. *Rāma*, however, told her not to be sad because even if the village was called Raghurājpur the name of the *maujā* was Jānkādeipur - one of *Sītā's* names being *Jānaki*. That was the beginning of Raghurājpur".

38 In 1994 the number had increased to ten.

39 They are the ones who have time to go. Others would like to go to Chandanpur if they had the time and money.

journeys made by villagers. Village exogamy and viri local residence results in a continuous flow of people travelling between villages to visit relatives.

A Stroll through Raghurājpur

One approaches Raghurājpur from the highway which runs between Bhubaneshwar and Puri. Following the lane towards the hamlet one passes through the local bazaar where some of the villagers have come for tea and a chat. Crossing the railway line, the lane runs along the banks of the river Bhargavi. Half a kilometre before Raghurājpur a signboard announces that a Master Craftsman in the village sells "*patta* paintings, Orissan traditional antique art, paintings and handicrafts".

Coconut palms frame the entrance to the village. A tiny signboard instructs visitors to leave their vehicles in front of the old banyan tree, just next to the cooperative. This building provides a relatively cool place to work and a couple of the younger *patta* painters are bending over their paintings. On the other side of the banyan tree, i.e. opposite the signboard, lives the village goddess *Bhuāsunī*. The big platform in front of her is an excellent place to play *ganjapā*, an Orissan card game, or simply to sit and chat. Many important decisions concerning the lives of the villagers are taken here.

Raghurājpur consist of two rows of thatched houses separated by two paths running in front of the houses. The temples of *Rādhāmohana* (*Rādhākrishna*), *Gopinatha* (*Krishna*), *Raghunatha* (*Rāma*), and *Gauranga* (*Krishna*) are situated between the two paths which occasionally converge making up the common space of the village. *Gauranga* temple is located at the other end of Raghurājpur just after the platform (*chandini*) on which deities enjoy swinging during the celebration of a complex of festivals related to *Holi*. A basil (*tulasī*) plant is placed on a pillar just before the

Gopinatha temple[40]. This *tulasī* plays a central role in the *chaurā pujā* performed every day during the Oriya month of *Kārtika* by the widows and married women of the village. A shrine for *Lakshminārāyana* is placed somewhat hidden between two *Chitrakāra* households. A household of weaver (*Tantī*) *jāti* has used a room facing the lane for the worship of the saint *Guru* Abhi Rama Paramahansa Dev who is very popular amongst the villagers.

None of the villagers, the majority of whom are of *Sudra varna*, are allowed to enter the temples of their village unless they have a ritual purpose[41]. For example, during the celebration of *Durgā pujā*, a *Chitrakāra* assists *Brahmins* during the last *pujās* performed for the goddess. Although the villagers do not enter the temples, they often sit on the surrounding platforms playing cards. There are, however, some who can not participate. Although allowed to take part when a game is played on the platform in front of the village goddess, the untouchables of *Shiala jāti* are not permitted to join any games on the platforms of the other temples in the village[42].

Following the left path one first comes across a couple of young stone carvers and a *patta* painter of *Chasā jāti*. They are all working in front of their houses. Some houses further down the lane, people from nine

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40 The *tulasī* plant (Ocimum gratissimum or Sanctum) is commonly worshipped by the followers of *Visnu*.

41 *Varna*, meaning colour in Sanskrit, is a pan-Indian textual classificatory category which divides the society into four: *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaisyas*, and *Sudras*. Fox has argued that *varna* should not simply be understood as a scriptural division but rather as a reference to "any indigenous ideological scheme which merges castes into larger status categories or classifications" (1969:27).

42 Despite the official abolition of Untouchability in 1955, practices of untouchability still continue in Orissa, as in many other parts of India. In theory an Untouchable is not allowed to sit on the platform in front of the village goddess even. The position of the platform in the outskirts of the village might explain this anomaly.

households are painting *patta*, some on their verandas, others inside. One of the households is of *Keuta jāti*, the rest are *Chitrakāras*.

A *patta* painter of *Chasā jāti* lives at the other end of the village. He is only rarely at home because he fears loosing customers who tend to stay in the centre of the village. Following the right path back one can see some of the painters at work from different households of *Chitrakāra jāti*, and in one case, *Baniā jāti*. The last house belongs to a man of astrologer (*Nāhāka*) *jāti* who makes a living selling paintings and crafts without actually producing any himself.

The Villagers of Raghurājpur

The size of Raghurājpur makes it a hamlet rather than a village. In 1991 only 93 households or 522 people lived in the village. Table 1 shows the *jātis*, their traditional occupation, the number of households, and the total population of Raghurājpur 1991.

Table 1:

Jāti	**Traditional occupation**	**Number of households**	**Total popl.***	**Average members per h.hld.****
Brahmin	Priests	1	7 (1.34%)	7.0
Chasā	Cultivators	36	178 (34.10%)	4.9
Gudiā	Confectioners	2	16 (3.07%)	8.0
Gauda	Cowherds	1	10 (1.92%)	10.0
Tantī	Weavers	4	29 (5.56%)	7.3
Paterā	Stone carvers	1	7 (1.34%)	7.0
Badhei	Carpenters	1	8 (1.53%)	8.0
Nāhāka	Astrologers	3	20 (3.83%)	6.7
Baniā	Goldsmiths	12	73 (13.98%)	6.1
Chitrakāra	Painters	21	119 (22.80%)	5.7
Keuta	Fishermen	7	47 (9.0%)	6.7
*Shiala****	Toddy makers	4	8 (1.53%)	2.0
Total		**93**	**522 (100%)**	**5.6**

* Population
** Household
*** Untouchables

With the exception of the *Brahmin* household which arrived in the village in the 1980s and the *Shiala* households, all *jātis* in Raghurājpur are of *Sudra varna*. *Keuta* and *Shiala* are classified as Scheduled Castes. As table 1 shows the majority of villagers are of *Chasā* and *Chitrakāra jātis*.

Superficially Raghurājpur appears to be an example of the multi-caste village which, in classical ethnography, has served as the standard model of Hindu social organisation (Mayer 1960). However, at least in one aspect the village is clearly different. Very few (almost no) *jātis* in Raghurājpur serve households of the village but several are engaged in patron-client relations with households of neighbouring villages. The village is an

extreme example of how *jāti* function and separation cross village boundaries as described by Raheja (1988:14)[43].

To an outsider it is only the craft producing activities which distinguish this village from other *Sudra* villages in Orissa. There is, however, another factor which, as far as it is correct, singles out Raghurājpur as a special case. Compared to the general national literacy level that of the village is remarkably high[44].

Table 2

Proportion of literate villagers (over 5 years) by *jāti* and age (1991):

Jāti	Group I 5-14 years %	Group II 15-29 years %	Group III 30-49 years %	Group IV 50 + %
Chasā	63.9	71.2	45.7	31.0
Baniā	93.8	95.7	83.3	76.9
Chitrakāra	100.0	67.7	61.5	9.5

As table 2 shows there is a general increase in literacy amongst the villagers of *Chasā*, *Baniā*, and *Chitrakāra jātis* as one moves from group IV to group I. The most striking change is found between 30-49 years old and 50 + years old *Chitrakāras*. This sudden increase needs to be seen in relation to the opening of the local school in 1954 (when the oldest people in group III were approximately 12 years old). The close physical position of the school meant that children (and in particular girls) could attend easily and safely, a factor which greatly increased the number of non-educated people deciding to send their children to school.

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43 According to Raheja villages in Uttar Pradesh are frequently identified with the locally dominant landholding caste in residence. There are a "village of Gujars", a "village of Rajputs" and so forth (1988:1). Although several of the *jātis* within the villages serve their respective *jajmāns* they will also travel to serve nearby villages (Raheja 1988:14-23).

44 These specific data were collected on the basis of interviews rather than observation and are therefore somewhat unreliable. The literacy, is not surprisingly, higher amongst men than women. In 1981 the literacy rate in Orissa was 34.2 % and in India in general it was 36.2 % (table 222 in Statistical Abstract India (1989:519).

The significant change in educational patterns amongst *Chitrakāras* has meant that contemporary painters are able to take notes on, for example, illustrations and themes from booklets or library books when they find it necessary. This high literacy makes possible for the first time what the elite of the art worlds have always assumed to be true - painters might end up having textual knowledge (see chapter 6 for a discussion on the ideas of the local and national elite).

A possible further cause, and also a reflection of this high literacy, is the surprising fact that Raghurājpur has a library, an exceptional phenomenon in a small village. It is situated next to the *Jāgāghara*, an institution where the elder men of the village come to play cards while the younger ones mainly use the room to carve stones, paint, conduct theatre rehearsals or, more rarely, practice wrestling. The library was founded in 1954 on behalf of Jānkādeipur *maujā*. The late Benudhara Sahu of *Baniā jāti*, holder of a Master's degree, took the initiative to found the library and a local school (Kapoteshwara School)[45]. People from the *maujā* were asked to donate books and the government assisted financially and provided a radio and an amplifier[46]. The intention and, indeed, the result was to provide villagers with access to information. In 1991-92 the library was run by Joyakrusna Das of the *Baniā jāti*.

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45 The villagers could not remember in which subject Benudhara Sahu had graduated.

46 The library has a diverse collection of books. There are various sections of the *Rāmāyana*. Likewise there are the various parts of the *Mahābhārata*. There are also a number of texts devoted to the praise of gods (the so called *purānas*) for example the *Siva*, *Nrusingha*, *Markandeya*, *Chandra*, *Surya*, *Skanda*, *Matsya*, *Bāmana*, *Agni*, *Brahmanda*, *Lakshmi*, and *Garuda purānas*.

The library also has a couple of biographies, a long list of Oriya dramas, and modern popular novels with titles such as "Tears and Affection" (*asru o mamatā*), "Scandal" (*apabāda*), "Unchaste Woman" (*asati*), "Science of Sex" (*rati bigyāna*), and "A Big Sigh" (*gotie dirghashwāsa*). A range of books have been classified under "Other" and include titles such as "Our History" (*āma itihāsa kathā*), "Husband and Wife" (*swāmi, stree*), "Twenty Five Stories by the Ghost" (*betāla panchabishati*), "*Gopi* Language" (*gopi bhāsā*) and "The Glories of Sri *Jagannātha*" (*Sri Jagannātha Mahimā*).

The users of the library were all men, mainly from Raghurājpur, but also from some of the neighbouring villages. In 1990-91, 104 books were lent out, 84 to villagers of Raghurājpur. People of *Baniā* jāti were the most frequent users and in particular one Lakshmidara Chinera, who taught pre-school children in one of the two *Chāhālīs* in the village[47]. Three painters had borrowed books for work purposes. Dīnabandhu Mahāpātra (I.2.3.1.) had copied several pages from Valmiki's Rāmāyana and wanted to compare Valmiki's version with the *Rāmcharitmānas* by Tulsī Dās. Ananta Mahāranā (E.1.2.) wished to consult the *Mahābhārata* and Kanduri Mahāranā (younger brother of Baraju Mahāranā [N.1.]) from Dānda Sāhi found it necessary to read the *Nrusingha purana* when Jagannātha Mahāpātra had ordered him to make some *Nrusingha* story paintings.

Decision Making within the Village

During my stay in Raghurājpur, decisions concerning the village were, with the exception of one case, taken within the village by the members of the village committee[48]. In 1984 the *Chitrakāra* Gopāla Mahāranā (E.1.3.1.) had taken over the role of leader (*mukhiā*) of the village after Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.)[49]. The criteria for a successful *mukhiā* are articulacy and ability to settle (potential) conflicts. The other members were from the *Chasā* (3), *Tantī* (2), *Gauda* (1), *Gudiā* (1), *Nāhāka* (1), and *Baniā* (1) *jātis*. The lowest ranking *jātis*, *Keuta* and *Shiala* were thus not represented.

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47 *Chāhālī* is an institution in which children among other things are taught the alphabet before they begin school. When compared to other villagers of Raghurājpur, people of the *Baniā jāti* have a much longer tradition of involvement with education (see table 2).

48 The villagers use the English word *committee* when referring to the village committee which, in 1992, consisted of ten members. Although there is an administrative structure - the *panchāyat* system - designed to permit local decision making, the local *panchāyat* covers several villages. This leaves a need for an organisation solely concerned with Raghurājpur and this need is satisfied by this committee.

49 Jagannātha Mahāpātra has been *mukhiā* twice: in the periods 1969-74 and 1979-84. From 1974-79, Bhāgabata Mahāranā (C.2.) was *mukhiā*.

If there are problems in the village, the *mukhiā* should attempt to solve them. If he can not find a solution, the case will be transferred to the police station and finally the District Judge's court in Puri. In the late 1980s a conflict between two parties in Raghurājpur escalated to a critical stage. The *mukhiā* at the time was not able to resolve the problem that had caused the trouble and decided to report the case to Chandanpur police station. In general, however, the villagers preferred to sort matters out themselves. Occasionally it was found necessary to call all the (male) household heads for a compulsory meeting and villagers, who did not turn up, were fined.

Castes and their Place in Space

Table 1 (page 57) elaborates a generally agreed **notional** hierarchy which emerged recurrently in everyday conversation. Rather than an actual commensal hierarchy as described by Mayer (1960) the pattern reflects the response of villagers when asked to list the *jātis* in Raghurājpur[50]. A hierarchy which results from highly hypothetical questions necessarily will be hypothetical itself. The ranking of table 1, particularly as regards the middle block of *jātis*, is therefore not of great significance when it comes to actual behaviour.

Although no systematic investigation was carried out, it is my impression that all *jātis*, with the exception of the highest (*Brahmin*) and the two lowest *Keuta* and *Shiala*, would eat together (take foods cooked in water [*kaccā*] from any other household) and have more or less equal status. The middle block of parallel, commensally equal *jātis* is strikingly similar to Mayer's "allied castes" (1960:33-40)[51].

50 Mayer has noted that the ranking he described in 1963, in terms of actual behaviour, to some extent was a notional one (1993:3).

51 cf. Dumon's discussion of status ranking (1980:86).

For the majority of villagers marked distinctions between *jātis* are thus not found within this *Shudra* village but are noticeable as soon as the villagers have to deal with people of higher *varna* from one of the other hamlets under the *Shāsana* village of Jānakādeipur. This is particularly so when it comes to the *Shāsana Brahmins* themselves.

Figure 8: Caste zoning in Raghurājpur 1991

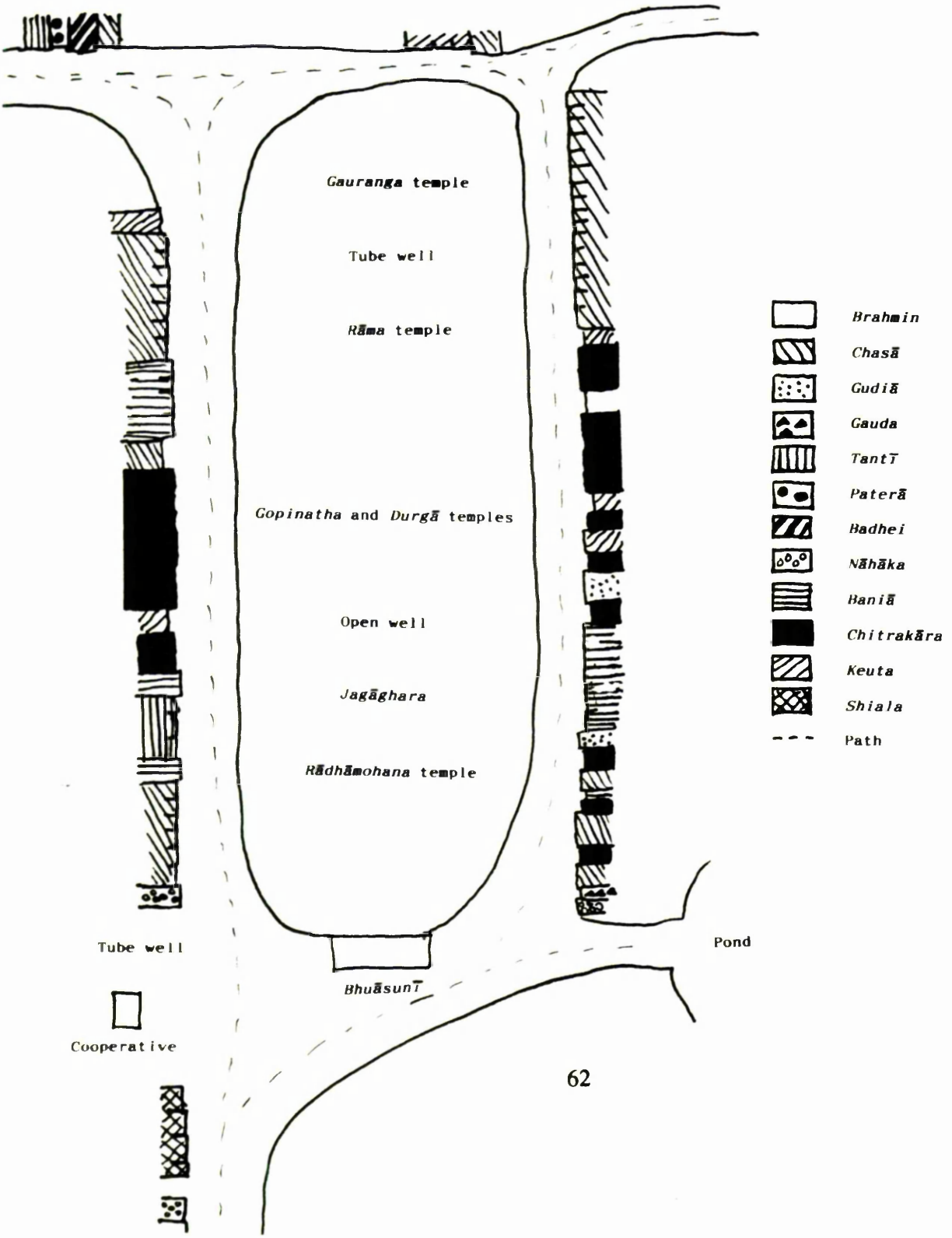

Figure 8 shows that Raghurājpur consists of three clusters of households of *Chasā jāti* (two of them separated by the mixed eastern lane), two clusters of *Chitrakāra jāti* situated opposite each other in the centre of the village and two smaller clusters of *Baniā jāti* situated on the eastern part of the northern lane and the western part of the southern lane. According to the villagers the clusters have always been more or less blurred and people and *jātis* of Raghurājpur have never had fixed places. There is, therefore, no reason to believe that the blurred clusters are a recent phenomenon.

In Raghurājpur interaction outside the all important family (which is, of course, still determined by jāti endogamy) is not exclusively determined by *jāti*. Ties of friendship, neighbourhood and locality play an important role too. This was evident when Dharama Mahāranā's daughter Sulā went to Puri hospital to give birth to her first child[52]. No less than ten people came to visit her at the hospital, the majority being of *Chitrakārā jāti* and only three of them being kin.

Amongst the visitors were her father; her mother's sister Prema and her son Gopāla (E.1.3.1.); a male *Chitrakāra*, the same age as Sula, who lived a few households away; a young man of *Chasā jāti* who lived in the same lane as Sula; a male *Chitrakāra* who lived next to Sula and was of her father's age group; her neighbour of the *Keuta jāti* and of her mother's age group; and a *Tantī jāti* couple who were also of her mother's age group.

It is, however, only at this very local level amongst the majority of villagers within Raghurājpur that distinctions between *jāti* do not determine daily interaction[53]. As we shall see later, outsiders who come to the village might experience discrimination on the basis of *jāti*. The villagers

52 It is becoming increasingly common for the women of Raghurājpur to go to the Puri hospital to give birth to their children.

53 Interaction with people of *Keuta jāti* and particularly *Shiala jāti* is still largely determined by *jāti* distinctions.

themselves are continuously reminded of their low status in the *jāti* hierarchy when interacting with high caste people outside the village. This is particularly evident in the *Chitrakāras'* interaction with *Shāsana Brahmins*. Before we focus on this, however, we shall look at pollution practices within the village.

Water and Contact Pollution in Raghurājpur

It is the villagers' access to wells rather than the physical positions of their houses that indicates most clearly the relatively relaxed attitude to *jāti* distinctions. There are no *jāti* restrictions on use of wells in the village. At dawn the women of the village meet to collect drinking water, several of them with their faces veiled. As in many parts of North and Central India, women are expected to veil their faces or at least cover their hair with the sari, when outside their household. The degree to which a woman is veiled reflects her position in a household. A newly wed daughter-in-law is expected to keep strict *odhanā*, inside as well as outside, the household[54]. These restrictions diminish as she becomes a mother and her position within the affinal household strengthens.

Raghurājpur has two working tube wells, one at each end of the village. The third one, situated somewhere in the middle, has saline and therefore undrinkable, water. In addition, there are two open wells, one in the western part of the village and another in the eastern part, a pond at the entrance of the village and the river at the eastern end. It is the intended use of the water, rather than *jāti* status, which determines the use of wells. Amongst the women of the village it is generally acknowledged that the tube well water ought to be used as drinking water, whereas the pond water should only be used for cooking purposes. For this reason children are most

54 *Odhanā* (veiling) is the Orissan analogy to *ghungat* and *pardā*. The significance of context for the degree of veiling places *Odhanā* closer to North Indian Hindu *gunghat* as described by Sharma rather than Muslim practices of *pardā* (1978).

commonly given tube well water to drink. The adults however, and in particular the older generation, do not like the taste of this water and prefer to drink the water of the open wells or of the pond, which, they describe as "sweet water" (*mithā pāni*), having a soft, sweet taste. The use of wells is therefore related to age and habit rather than *jāti*.

According to the villagers, rules of contact pollution were previously stricter. This weakening of restrictions is not surprising. There has been a general tendency throughout India for rules of contact pollution to diminish (Singh 1972; Mayer 1993)[55]. This tendency, however, is only apparent within the *Sudra* village itself. In general the *Shāsana Brahmins* of the neighbouring villages still refuse to accept water from a *Sudra*.

Rules of Commensality

Rules of commensality are still very important in the district of Puri. This was not only apparent from the *Chitrakāras'* relation to their *Brahmin* patrons (as we shall see in chapter 4) but also from the initial worries amongst some villagers concerning my presence.

During the first weeks of my stay in Raghurājpur in 1988, Lakshmidhara Subudhi of *Badhei jāti* would not let me enter his household. His worry was caused by my identity as a Christian[56]. However, after realising that all the

55 Comparing data from 1954 and 1992 collected in a central Indian village, Mayer has discussed commensality patterns and use of wells to show that caste distinction has loosened over time (1993:5-12).

56 The villagers classified me as Christian even before I had told them about my religious status. This was most probably done because people needed to position me within the caste hierarchy in order to know how to interact with me. In Orissa where the majority of the population are Hindu, many people consider Christians polluted and thus polluting due to their habit of eating beef. During the beginning of my stay I kept a strict vegetarian diet. Later however, I ate fish and eggs with the members of the *Chitrakāra* household in which I lived. Nobody in Raghurājpur ever hides the great pleasure they take in meat eating: even the *Shāsana Brahmins* eat meat, for which reason they have low status amongst South Indian *Brahmins*.

other villagers let me come into their homes he invited me to have tea with members of his household. Mukunda Mahāranā's family faced problems during the first couple of months because I ate with them. Other *Chitrakāra* complained about the fact that a household of their *jāti* ate with a Christian.

However, after a while people gradually forgot their original concerns and it became important for people that I had actually eaten in their household. With the exception of households of *Shiala jāti*, I ate in the houses of all the other *jātis* and in those houses, in all but one instance, I ate with family members. It has been shown how food in Hindu South Asia serves two diametrically opposed semiotic functions: it can either homogenise the actors who transact in it, or it can serve to heterogenise them (Appadurai 1981). In the exceptional case referred to above, the invitation served both functions at the same time. By inviting me to eat, the household indicated to other households that they had accepted me. However, having accepted the invitation it turned out I was to eat on my own. I was, after all, a potentially defiling person.

There are, however, instances where a relationship is considered more important than the possible defilement caused by eating in the presence of a person of lower caste status. In 1994 Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.) had a *Brahmin* student who ate his meals in his *guru's* household, chiefly because it would have been inconvenient to travel back and forth between Raghurājpur and his home in Puri.

In the district of Puri, *Brahmins* are in general opposed to eating in the company of people of lower *jāti*. This *jāti* convention, however, in this particular case, conflicted with the generally accepted rule in India, that one must respect one's *guru*. To refuse to eat with one's *guru* would indeed be a serious offence. The breaking up of *jāti* dependent occupation patterns has thus (invariably) been followed by a diminishing of *jāti* restrictions.

The most vocal critics of rules of commensality were, in general, those who travelled outside the state or country and were consequently often craftsmen (of different *jātis*)[57]. Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.) was one of the painters who often engaged in discussions on *jāti*, dismissing the phenomenon. He argued (erroneously) that a well functioning society like Japan (he went to Japan in 1988) does not have any equivalent of *jāti* divisions and that such a structure is therefore not necessary at all. He often related how Mamatā Behera and the other Scheduled Caste apprentices had lunch in his house during their period of apprenticeship[58]. The old Master Craftsman used every possible occasion to stress that he was opposed to any kind of *jāti* restrictions and once responded to my queries:

> "In this village we do not have any *jāti* restrictions. The only *jāti* division here is that between the sexes[59].

This might be the ideal, but traces of the former exclusion of Untouchables can still be found. Although members of *Shiala* households can now enter the houses of other *jātis* in the village, they are, as mentioned, still not allowed to sit at the platforms in front of the temples or to carry the deities in processions.

That *jāti* was still considered an important issue was not only apparent in the restrictions on commensality. Rules of endogamy were still crucially important. It is perhaps in the determination of the marriage partner that *jāti* ideology most clearly continues to reveal itself. Only one household (of *Chitrakāra jāti*) had broken with this pattern: the son of the household had

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57 It is craftsmen who are invited to participate in exhibitions and sell their products at fairs all over India.

58 This acceptance of food from a higher caste might be interpreted as a reinforcement of their subordination. However, I do not think this was the case.

59 i.e. the only separation amongst people which Jagannātha acknowledged was that between men and women. *Jāti* denotes a 'genus' or 'species' but as Parry has suggested, it can also refer to other segmentary levels (1979:85).

married a Christian. In response other *Chitrakāras* refused to eat or drink with the household.

However, even if *jāti* is still important in respect to commensality and endogamy, rules of contact pollution have diminished within the village, as I have already suggested[60]. As observed above there are no restrictions on the use of wells or pumps in the village and people moved in and out of each others' houses.

The Nature of Hereditary Patron-Client Relationships

A factor which links Raghurājpur with neighbouring villages is the network of patron-client relations which make ritual specialists (such as *Brahmins*, *Chitrakāras*, Barbers (*Bārikas*), or washermen (*dhobas*) cross villages boundaries. Particularly relevant here are the *Shāsana Brahmins* for whom the *Chitrakāras* paint on ritual occasions.

The *Shāsana Brahmins* were induced to come to Puri from Jaipur by the *rājās* of Puri. The first *Shāsana* village was established during the reign of Govinda Vidyadhara (1541-48 A.D.) (Ray 1956:7-8). Today Puri district contains 16 *Shāsana* villages inhabited by Orissa's highest ranking (*Shāsana*) *Brahmins*. While the lanes and houses of Raghurājpur are narrow and cramped, the *Shāsana Brahmin* villages are spacious with wide lanes, large houses, and courtyards. Like other *Shāsana* villages, Jānakādeipur attracted lower ranking *jātis* such as *Chitrakāra* who settled in nearby hamlets in order to be near their patrons.

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60 As we shall see in chapter 4 this is not the case when it comes to the painters' relation with *Shāsana Brahmins*. When *Chitrakāras* go to paint for their *Brahmin* patrons at *Rekha Panchāmi* (*Bhādraba krusna* 5) for example, they are not allowed to enter the kitchen if anybody is cooking or eating.

In his account of the *Shāsana* village Bira-Narasinghapur, Ray describes how servants (*sebakas*) of the *Brahmins* are allocated land (*jāgir*) from the village communal property for their services - the use of the land being conditional upon the performance of their respective duties[61] (ibid.:13).

While no *Chitrakāras* in Raghurājpur owned such land in 1991, there were two *Chitrakāras* in Dānda Sāhi who still had the right to claim half the crops grown on their *jāgir* land[62]. They did not, however, get their full share and this was one of the reasons why one of them decided to discontinue his ritual painting work. Moreover the land they had was not of good quality and they had therefore asked the *kotha* (the organisation responsible for the temple properties) to exchange the land with some that was more fertile. Although some painters in 1991 were still paid in kind (with, for example, coconuts) when painting on specified days in the yearly ritual cycle, the majority were paid in cash.

The ties between a *Chitrakāra* and a *Brahmin* are most commonly hereditary. When a *Chitrakāra* dies or is unable to carry out work for a patron, the oldest son of the painter will take over the responsibility. If a household has no sons the task is likely to be transferred to a relative, for example a son-in-law or a nephew, but it might also be performed by a separate household.

Rather than being interlinking as part of a wider *jajmānī* system, as described by Wiser (1969), here there are only fragmented patron-client relationships. There is no unifying grain heap, the metaphor for exchange relationships used by British administrators in India as well as later

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61 Ray does not specifically mention *Chitrakāras*.

62 The land is the property of a temple in the village and is administrated by the *kotha* (people responsible for the properties [mainly land] of the temples of a village). The *Chitrakāras* do not themselves farm the land but get half of the crop. The people who farm the land get the other half.

anthropologists (Fuller 1989:33)[63]. If a painter, on his way to perform a service for a patron in a neighbouring village, is asked why he is going, he will simply describe the work he is about to do: "I will paint *Nrusingha's* image" or, more rarely, state that he will do *pujā* related work (*pujā kāma*). There is no contextualisation of the hereditary links as a system and certainly no use of the elaborate notion of *jajmānī* system. I will therefore exclusively refer to these relations as hereditary patron-client relations.

Although it is his righteous duty (*dharma*), a painter can leave his ritual work for a patron if the painter so wishes. The merit (*punya*) resulting from this work is almost never mentioned as a reason for continuing the relation and certainly does not hinder those painters whose skill is acknowledged and who are well established in the tourist industry, from giving up their ritual work (see chapter 4, page 270).

It is, as indicated, not only the *Chitrakāras* who work as clients for their *Brahmin* patrons. As Raghurājpur has no *Brahmins* who can perform *pujās* in temples, the village has patron-client ties to the neighbouring villages of Dānda Sāhi, Bhagabanpur, and Bhasudeipur[64]. Four *Brahmin sebakas* come to perform the daily *pujās* in the temples of *Rādhāmohana* (*Rādhākrishna*), *Gopinatha* (*Krishna*), *Raghunatha* (*Rāma*), and *Gauranga* (*Krishna*), a service for which they were paid Rs. 50 and 11 sacks (75 kg. each) of paddy per year. A *Mālī* (Gardener) from Bhasudeipur comes twice daily to worship the village goddess *Bhuāsunī*. Raghurājpur's links to neighbouring villages are thus close but, as we shall see, involve sporadic hierarchical patron-client relations, rather than the complex horizontal web of mutual relations which is taken for granted in analyses of "*jajmānī*" systems.

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63 Fuller has criticised anthropologists' use of the term *jajmānī* system which he describes as an "anthropological fiction" implying an encompassing Indian phenomenon (1989:34).

64 The man of the *Brahmin* household in Raghurājpur is not a priest and he can not therefore perform the *pujās* in the temples.

An Appropriate Place in Space and the Language of Hierarchy

During a visit to a painter of the *Chitrakāra jāti* from Dānda Sāhi, I was seated on a bed while he sat on a mat. A young man passed by and decided to pay a visit, most probably because he saw a foreigner in the house. When the *Chitrakāra* offered him a mat he half jokingly said he could not possibly sit at the feet of a Christian. Deeply concerned and mumbling about god (*Bhagabān*), the painter immediately ordered me to sit on the floor, trying to make up for the mistake. The visitor was a *Shāsana Brahmin* from a neighbouring village.

A parallel kind of spatial hierarchy has been illustrated by Cohn (1955). He describes how a teacher of high *jāti*, when entering a household of *Thākur* (Rajput) *jāti* is offered a string cot or a chair, whereas a teacher of *Camār jāti*, (whose status according to Cohn has been described as Untouchable [1955:60-61]), will be offered an up-turned basket. An uneducated *Camar* will have to sit on the floor (Cohn 1955:74). This example is used to argue that even if occupation raises status, *jāti* identity nevertheless constrains the possibility of equality with a higher caste colleague.

It is not only spatial positions which work as symbols of hierarchy. Language is also a way in which caste status can be expressed. Once when I was talking with a *Shāsana Brahmin* friend at Chandanpur bazaar an uncle of his came and joined our conversation. While we stood there a *Chitrakāra* from Dānda Sāhi passed by. I was about to greet him with due respect[65] when the uncle of my friend shouted at him:

> "Hey you, why haven't you collected the coconuts yet? I told you to do it several weeks ago. Go and get them!"

65 Younger people are expected to greet older people with a *namaskāra* (a greeting).

It was terribly embarrassing to see the otherwise dignified *Chitrakāra* bow his head in respect for this young *Brahmin* who had not only greeted him with a *tu*[66], but also made a demand rather than a polite entreaty.

It may be experiences like this with *Shāsana Brahmins* - some of whom are their patrons - which makes it important for the old *Chitrakāras* in particular to stress the importance of their work and origin. When describing the work of *Chitrakāras*, Kunja Mahāranā, who in Raghurājpur is an acknowledged authority on texts (*purānas* and stanzas [*slokas*]), often chanted:

> "We are called *Chitrakāra* because we make paintings using four colours created by the four *Vedas*[67]. We make *rekhā, rekhā* means line. Chi-tra-kā-ra. *Ruka, Syāma, Jaju, Atharva. Sankha, hingula, haritāla, kalā*".

Kunja interpreted the four syllables in the word *Chitrakāra* as symbolising the four *Vedas* and four colours used by *Chitrakāras*. The four *Vedas* are: *Rig, Yajur, Sama,* and *Atharva* and the colours are white (*sankha*), yellow (*haritāla*), red (*hingula*), and black (*kalā*). This rather far fetched interpretation indicates how important it is to Kunja to establish a link between *Chitrakāras* and the *Vedas*. In what can, perhaps, best be described as a peculiar variant of Sanskritization Kunja indicates the importance of the *Chitrakāras* and their work[68].

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66 The polite form of *tume* (you) in Oriya is *apanna* as opposed to *tu* which is used amongst friends or addressed to people younger than the person speaking. The English language does not allow for a translation whereas French, for example, has a somewhat similar distinction between *Vous* and *tu*.

67 The four *Vedas*, which are one of the oldest literary texts, each consist of two parts, one of which is a collection of *mantras* or hymns and the other which contains ritualistic precepts and illustrations.

68 Sanskritization is used as defined by Srinivas (1955:481).

The *Chitrakāras*' response towards *jāti* restrictions, however, is not limited to stressing the value of their occupation. During my stay, Kunja Mahāranā several times recited the following poem[69]:

> "Behold o king, here comes the eternal log floating across the river, which is bathed in the rays of the morning sun. It is neither yours nor mine. It is the Lord who is universally adored. A salute to *Vishvakarma* who far excelled the artist of heaven [by building the temple of *Jagannātha*]. Observing the workmanship of the temple, which is a great achievement and a great property of Hindus, all the powers of Orissa will bow down at the feet of *Jagannātha*. The Oriyas will exceed all others in richness, greatness and status. The *Sri Kshyetra*[70] of Utkala[71] will be centre of the union of mankind. Forgetting their high or low status *Brahmins* will eat food from the hands of *Harijans*. The sinner will be salvaged by the touch of *kaibalya*[72]".

Kunja Mahāranā sang the poem during discussions concerned with the ritual work of the *Chitrakāras*. He claimed he was the author but according to another villager, Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.), the poem was written by a dramatist called Mohana Goswami, a man opposed to the caste system. The statement that *Brahmins* will begin to eat from the hands of *Harijans* might be - but is not necessarily - an expression of an opposition to the commensal restrictions associated with caste hierarchy.

We have seen how spatial positions and language can work as symbols of hierarchy. We shall now turn our attention to a more tangible factor which reflects the unequal relation between *Sudras* of Raghurājpur and their patrons of higher *jāti*.

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69 The translation of this poem was undertaken by Prasanta Mishra, Puri.

70 *Sri Kshyetra* denotes Puri town illustrated as a conch shell.

71 Former Orissan empire.

72 Dried, cooked rice, and *mahāprasāda* of the *Jagannātha* temple. *Prasāda* of the *Jagannātha* temple is known as *mahāprasāda* and is considered so pure that a *Brahmin* can eat it even if it is the leftovers of a dog. Should he refuse to eat it he will go to the hell known as *kumbhipāka*.

Landownership and Patterns of Employment

As it has not been possible to get exact information on land ownership from the collector's office in Puri, I have had to rely on information from the villagers of Raghurājpur as well as the *Patwari* Krushna Chandra Mahanty who, in 1991, was responsible for official records of the Revenue Villages (*maujās*) of the area[73].

At the very eastern end of the village, across the river, there are fields for as far as one can see. The land, however, is not owned by the villagers of Raghurājpur. 70% of the households in the village are landless, only 31 out of 89 own any land in the neighbouring Bāliā or Dāsgobā *maujās*. On average the petty landowners own less than 2.0 acres of land, one household, however, has no less than 12 acres. By far the majority of land in Jānakādeipur *maujā* (to which Raghurājpur belongs) is owned by *Brahmins*, popularly known as "*Hālua*" *Brahmins*[74]. This particular land is very fertile and therefore suitable for betel farming. No less than 12 households in Raghurājpur earn their entire income from working as daily labourers, mainly in the betel fields but also in construction work in the area. 36 combine working as (daily) labourers with small scale craft production, and yet another 26 earn their main income from production or selling of crafts (see table 3, page 78).

The main crops of Bāliā and Dāsgobā *maujās* are paddy (*dhāna*) and to a lesser extent gram, dals, and groundnuts. While the paddy plots in Dās gobā are owned by *Shāsana Brahmins*, it is households of the *Khandāyatta* (farmer) *jāti* which own the paddy fields in Bāliā *maujā*. The households in Raghurājpur which own some land grow either paddy (*dhāna*), urad dal

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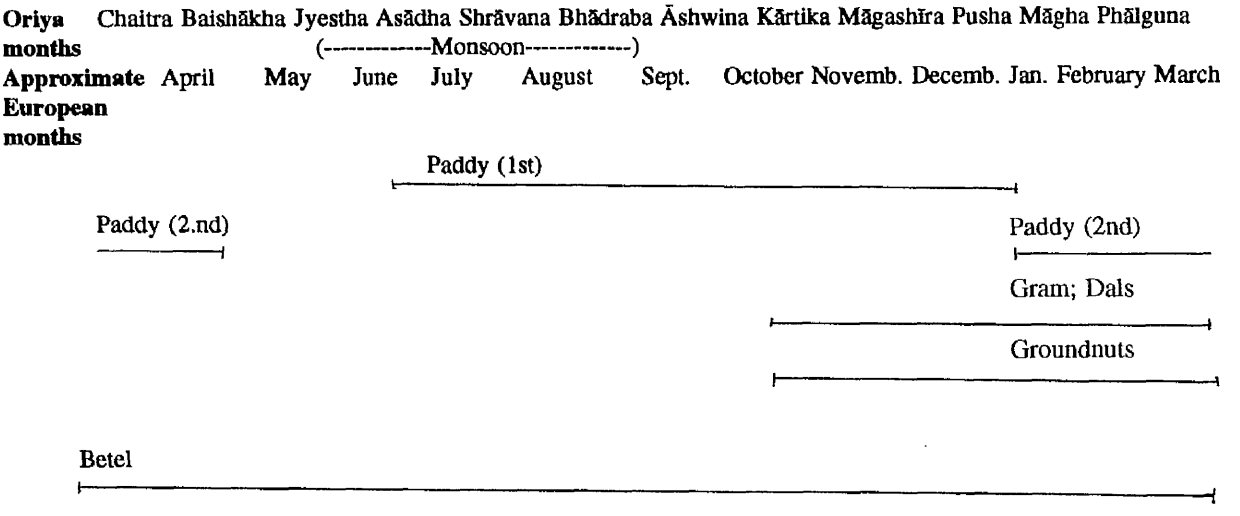
73 The collector's office in Puri was only willing to provide information on land ownership in return for a substantial fee.

74 "*Haluā* indicates that they are farmers - *hala* means to plough. These *Brahmins* have a lower status than the *Shāsana Brahmins*.

(*biri*), mungh dal (*muga*), gram (*kolatha*), groundnuts (*bādām*)[75] or to a lesser extent betel (*pāna*)[76]. The latter is the only crop which can be cultivated and harvested throughout the year but it requires, as I have observed, fertile soil.

Figure 9: The agricultural cycle of farming activities in Jānakādeipur, Bāliā, and Dāsgobā *maujās*:



75 In Hindi *bādām* means almonds.

76 The petty landowners of Raghurājpur are mainly of *Chasā jāti*. Some, however, are of *Baniā* and *Keuta jāti*.

Even the people who own some land have to supplement their meagre income by working as daily labourers. The common salary for a full day's work in the fields in 1991-92 was Rs. 20. Often there was no work at all, and a monthly income of only Rs. 300 was therefore not uncommon amongst those households which did not produce any handicrafts[77]. Surprisingly, the daily salary of cultivators is not seasonally determined but is stable at Rs. 20 throughout the year. For those engaged in construction work, however, the salary increases from Rs. 20 to Rs. 30 or Rs. 35 in the winter season when the majority of construction work takes place and competition for labour increases.

Raghurajpur's Transformation to a Crafts Village

The number of petty landowners and landless taken into consideration it is not surprising that many villagers have looked for alternative sources of income. We shall briefly look at the development in craft production within the village before we turn our attention to the contemporary production.

Until 1950 only a few *Chitrakāras* painted for ritual occasions and made paintings on newspaper for pilgrims. Most villagers made their living as daily labourers in the nearby fields. After the 1950s the number of active painters increased (see chapter 2). One of the painters, Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.), made his household into a *gurukula Āshrama* and taught apprentices the art of *patta* painting.

77 It was generally agreed that it was difficult to manage with less than Rs. 500 per month. The figures stated in the main text are approximate. As anybody who has lived or worked in India will know, it is extremely difficult to obtain accurate information on such matters. When talking with some of the young handicraft producers in Raghurājpur, they told me that another anthropologist had asked them about their monthly income. When they told her they made approximately Rs. 1000 per month she had responded by saying they had no reason to complain. She repeated her question some weeks later and found that the monthly salary had decreased to Rs. 600 per month!

In the early 1970s one of the villagers, Jyotindra Swain (*Baniā jāti*) decided to begin carving in stone rather than paint *pattas* because he found the competition too fierce. From Bhāgabata Mahāranā (C.2.) he had heard about the Training Centre which had opened in Bhubaneshwar in 1966. The majority of the stone carvers in Raghurājpur had, in 1991, first attended the course offered at the Training Centre, but had continued as apprentices of Jyotindra.

In the 1980s the State Government financed several courses in mask making held by *Chitrakāras* for Schedule Caste women. In 1991 the number of female mask producers were still increasing. Several *Keuta* women had begun to work for *Chitrakāras* and were paid Rs. 4-6 per day to make masks. Rs. 150 was a significant contribution to a household which otherwise earned approximately Rs. 300-500 per month.

By the 1990s many of those villagers who were still not involved in craft production were encouraging their children to learn one of the crafts produced in the village because, as it was often said, "Raghurājpur has become a crafts village".

Table 3 shows that the majority of households in Raghurājpur, in 1991, depended on craft production, either as a main source of income or as a contribution to other incomes.

Table 3

The households of Raghurājpur and their occupation

Jāti	Traditional occupation*	Daily labour	Craft production	Craft Production + other	Other	Total
Brahmin					1	1
Chasā	7	10	1	13	5**	36
Gudiā	2					2
Gauda	1					1
Tantī	1			1	2	4
Paterā				1		1
Badhei				1		1
Nāhāka				2	1**	3
Baniā	1		4	7		12
*Chitrakāra****			18	3		21
Keuta				7		7
Shiala		2	1	1		4
All *jātis*	**12**	**12**	**24**	**36**	**9**	**93**

* The categories of "traditional occupation" and "daily labourer" overlap. Only farmers who do not depend on daily labour have been classified under "traditional occupation".

** One male of *Chasā jāti* and one of *Nāhāka jāti* earn a living exclusively selling crafts.

*** The traditional occupation of *Chitrakāras* is to paint and make crafts. I have chosen to classify *Chitrakāras'* occupation under "craft production", rather than "traditional occupation" for sake of clarification.

Out of the 93 households in the village only 31 (33.33 %) do not gain any part of their income from craft production or sale of crafts. 26 households (27.96 %) earn the whole of their living by producing or selling crafts and 36 (38.71 %) earn part of their income from craft production.

The elders of the village claim that the willingness of the generation born in the 1960s to choose whatever employment is available rather than that traditionally associated with their *jāti* is a recent phenomenon. *Jāti* dependent occupational specialisation was perhaps more common in the past, but the elders' misconception clearly reflects a nostalgic memory of an imagined past. As we shall see in chapter 2 the *Chitrakāras*, for example, until Independence mainly made a living growing betel rather than painting.

The households which, in 1991, were worst off in Raghurājpur were the ones which depended upon daily labouring as the only source of income (earning approximately Rs. 350 a month). Some of the women of these households wanted to learn mask making but could not find anybody in the village willing to teach them the craft. They saw this as a symptom of the increasing competition amongst the craft producers of the village.

Table 4 shows *jātis* of Raghurājpur and the specific crafts they produce.

Table 4

Number of persons producing specific types of crafts ordered according to *jāti* and gender in Raghurājpur 1991

Jāti	*Patta*	*Jātri-patti**	Palm leaves	C.d.toys, P.masks, W.figures**	Stone carv.	Sale of craft ***	Total number ****
Brāhmin							
Chasā							
F				9			9
M	3			2	8	2	15
T(otal)	3			11	8	2	24
Gudiā							
Gauda							
Tantī							
F				1			1
M							
T				1			1
Paterā							
F				1			1
M							
T				1			1
Badhei							
F				2			2
M				2			2
T				4			4
Nāhāka							
F							
M			1*****			2	3
T			1			2	3
Baniā							
F				7			7
M	1			5	6		12
T	1			12	6		19
Chitrakāra							
F	2	11		17			30
M	18	3	3	11		2	37
T	20	14	3	28		2	67
Keuta							
F	1						1
M	1			11			12
T	2			11			13
Shiala							
F							
M				2			2
T				2			2
Total	**26**	**14**	4	**70**	**14**	**6**	**134**

* Included in this category are women who assist their husbands painting *pattas*.

** C.d. toys = Toys made of cow dung.
P. masks = Masks made of paper.
W. figures = wooden figures.

*** Only people who sell other peoples paintings on a regular basis have been included in this category. Painters who bring others' crafts when going to an exhibition for example have not been included, as they all, without exception, will do that.

**** Total number of craft producers and sellers.

***** The astrologer also sells crafts.

Pattas for Sale

The painters of Raghurājpur generally sell their paintings through the painters (and middlemen) Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.), Kālucharana Bārika (K.), and Lingarāj Mahāranā (C.1.1.); the palm leaf engraver Kailāsha Nāyaka; three local middlemen: Bānāmbara Nāyaka, Gangā Nāyaka, and X or two middlemen from neighbouring villages. One of them was the *Brahmin* Laksmidhara Pandā who preferred to sell paintings on a section of the beach dominated by foreign tourists who generally have no idea about local prices. He usually purchased paintings made by relatively inexperienced apprentices and painters. They commonly produced relatively small *pattas* ranging between 6" x 4" and 12" x 10", sizes well suited to travelling tourists. Unlike Laksmidhara who purchased the paintings outright, the local middlemen paid a painter only after the work had been sold[78]. When a painter delivered a painting he and the middleman agreed on a price and the middleman would then sell at a higher price which secured him a profit.

Other outlets are exhibitions and fairs either within or outside the state or, less commonly, festivals held abroad. Painters visiting these exhibitions

78 Jagannātha Mahāpātra and the middleman Bānāmbara Nāyaka are exceptions to this rule and often give advance.

always aim to take as large a collection of paintings as possible. Both painters and middlemen have adopted a price system first conceived by the Handicraft Corporation Utkalikā. This involves a square inch rate, fixed according to the skill of the craftsman, and the execution of the painting. Rates range between 40 n.p. and Rs. 1 per square inch[79]. Only when selling directly to tourists (Indian and well as foreign) is this system not used.

It is, among other things, this curious calculation of value which causes more skilled painters to refuse to sell through the co-operative to the Government Handicraft Corporation (see chapter 2, figure 10 for an outline of the government handicraft institutions). In general less skilled painters also prefer to sell paintings to other painters or middlemen rather than the co-operative because the government institution often delays payment. In 1991 the only crafts (mainly paper masks) sold to the co-operative in Raghurājpur were the ones which could not be sold elsewhere at a higher price[80].

In the cold season foreign tourists frequently purchased crafts directly from the craftsmen in the village. Crafts can fetch a comparatively high price if sold to people who are not familiar with the price system. Few foreign tourists can refer to former purchases and are consequently uncertain about prices. To them *pattas* have the qualities of the bazaar's ungraded and loosely sold commodities where price's fluidity reflects customers' inability to systematically evaluate quality in relation to price (Fanselow 1990:254).

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79 In 1994 the minimum rate had increased to 60 n.p. per square inch. Some especially skilled painters exceeded the Utkalikā scale and charged between Rs. 1 and 2.50 per square inch.

80 In contrast to the *patta* painters from Raghurājpur the Dānda Sāhi painters, who to a large extent depended upon Raghurājpur for the sale of paintings, generally welcomed orders from Utkalikā.

The picture is a little different when it comes to the majority of Indian customers. Although some see Orissan *pattas* for the first time, their idea of a reasonable price, when compared to foreign customers, is based on more extensive investigation. Like the foreign customers they might not be able to compare the price of a *patta* to previous purchases but will almost certainly be familiar with prices of other types of Indian painting. Moreover many are familiar with other types of Indian line painting, a knowledge which, even if basic, provides a basis for an estimation of the quality of an Orissan *patta*[81].

There are examples of painters selling *pattas* which had taken a couple of months to complete for Rs. 4000. Only rarely do the poorest of the *patta* painters benefit from the foreign tourists' lack of knowledge of prices. In general they are unable to wait for the arrival of tourists in the cold season and thus have to accept payment by square inch.

It is the economic insecurity of poorer painters which makes it possible for middlemen to make an easy profit. For example, a middleman who, in 1994, purchased two *pattas* from a painter in Puri at Rs. 1500 for a 5 x 3 feet image and Rs. 2100 for a 5 x 3 feet image sold them at a fair in Bombay for Rs. 3000 and Rs. 7000. Even deducting travel expenses the middleman still had almost Rs. 6000 left in profit. It is not surprising that middlemen and painters dealing in crafts are amongst the people in the village who are relatively well off (owning a scooter, a television, a radio, and the like).

Tourists who visited Raghurājpur were often accompanied by a guide. If a tourist purchased a *patta* painting in the village the guide expected approximately 10% in commission (the tourists were never informed of the transactions between a guide and the craft producers). However, some

81 For a discussion of evaluations of *patta* paintings see chapter 5.

guides exploit their role as translators. For example an American couple asked Mukunda Mahāranā (C.1.) the price of a painting and the guide translated the price to double what Mukunda had requested.

Unlike the *patta* produced for the tourist market, the work of repainting wooden *patās* for worship has so far never reached more than a two-digit figure[82]. Unless a *Brahmin* had specifically requested a *Chitrakāra* to execute a fine piece of craftsmanship (and agreed to pay accordingly), painters would charge between Rs. 5 and 25 for the repainting of a *patā.* Only in one case during my stay did I come across a *patā* for which a *Brahmin* had paid Rs. 80. This was painted by Nārāyana Mahāranā (C.1.-s-i-1), rather than his brothers or mother, and obviously had involved a great amount of time and work.

As we shall see in chapter 4, when painting on the walls of *Brahmin* households or on temples, *Chitrakāras* (and we should note that only *Chitrakāras* paint as *sebakas* in patron-client relations) are paid very little given the amount of work involved. Wall paintings measuring approximately 48" x 48" would often yield only Rs. 15-20. It is clearly the tourist industry one should turn to if one wants to make money and then preferably dealing in, rather than producing, paintings.

82 These paintings are described in chapter 3, section III. For information on paintings made for religious purposes see moreover chapter 4.

A glimpse of Puri Market 1991

Thousands of pilgrims come to Puri every year to pay a visit to the Lord of the world - one of *Jagannātha*'s many names - and to enjoy the sea beach[83]. Puri is always visited by pilgrims but especially so in the month of *Āsādha*, the Oriyā month in which the car festival (*Ratha Jātrā*) takes place, and in the month of *Kārtika*, in which *Kālī pujā* is celebrated. The pilgrims can easily be recognised by their inexpensive cotton clothes, and the bundles of belongings they carry.

In the bazaar area in front of the *Jagannātha* temple they spend part of the day looking for the cheapest prints, key rings or any other item with a depiction of *Jagannātha*[84]. They are the main customers of the stalls, but not very popular with the stall keepers who prefer the Bengali tourists who have more money to spend[85].

The bazaar is open in the mornings but the time to go browsing is late afternoon. A varied range of items are displayed in the endless stalls situated along the main road (*Bada Dānda*): framed prints, posters, necklaces made of shells, stone carvings of various Hindu

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83 In a very enjoyable book, Ann Gold has described the journey of pilgrims from Mehru village in Rajasthan to Puri in Orissa (1988). They visited the temple of *Jagannātha* only briefly spending the main part of the time in Puri submerged in the cool sea.

84 Amongst the elite of Orissa these items are cause for concern. In two unpublished articles an art specialist X describes them as follows: "The shops selling *thiā badhiā* or *jātri pati* have become rare. [They are being replaced by stalls] selling all kinds of souvenirs such as finger rings, lockets, printed photographs. It is lamentable that such ugly materials are receiving patronage from the pilgrims and important art forms of Orissa are being neglected" and "The pilgrims visiting Puri have a number of choices to buy as souvenirs. The younger generation prefer lockets and rings to *pata* [sic] paintings. Their faith has turned into a fashion".

85 There are, of course, also tourists from other Indian states as well as foreigners. Tourists here denote people who, during their visit in Puri, stay in a hotel with the main purpose of enjoying the beach and the fresh air interrupted by an occasional visit to the temple. Pilgrims (from all over India) stay in comparatively inexpensive lodgings (*Dharmshālās*) and their visit centre around activities related to the temple, interrupted by occasional ritual bathing in the sea.

deities, bangles, dots used to decorate the forehead of women (*tikili*[86]) and nail polish, mirrors depicting *Jagannātha*, paper tigers with nodding heads, coloured cane sticks, red powder (*sindura*), paper masks and *Balabhadra, Subhadrā* and *Jagannātha* carved in wood. It is striking that almost no *patta* paintings or *jātri pattis* are displayed.

A single shop owner confirms he has *patta* paintings but they turn out to be chromolithographs produced in Orissa's former capital Cuttack. When asked, one or two of the people selling directly from trunks and boxes find a few *jātri pattis* at the bottom of their trunks. The paintings have been produced in the households of the salesmen, also of *Chitrakāra jāti*. Like many of the other *Chitrakāras* of Puri living in the vicinity of the temple, they make a living making and selling various crafts at the Puri bazaar.

Conclusion

It is lack of land and work and the consequent poverty, rather than a yearning to engage in aesthetic production, which has made craft production attractive to so many villagers of Raghurājpur. To these people the arts and crafts they produce are first of all a source of livelihood.

Their engagement in craft production is in other words a matter of economic necessity. Any attempt to interpret their interest in crafts as, for example, expressions of an Orissan identity or their crafts as material manifestations of their comprehension and knowledge of Sanskrit learning (see chapter 2 and 6) would fail to represent what the craft production means to the villagers, namely a means of livelihood.

As we have seen, crafts production, in 1991, was a source of livelihood for more than half of the households in Raghurājpur. An obvious question

86 In Hindi known as *bindi*.

arising from this information is whether handicraft production has always played such an important role as an income generating activity in the village. According to the villagers this was not the case. However, before turning to their account of the history of their craft production, we will focus on an account by a Polish American couple, Philip and Halina Zealey, to whom I have already referred in this chapter. This is one of the concerns of the next chapter.

Chapter 2

The "Revival" of *Patta* Painting and the National Concern for Craft Production

This chapter examines what has been described as "a revival of *patta* paintings", a process which took place after India gained Independence. This "revival" was initiated by a Polish American couple named Halina and Philip Zealey. The enhanced production of *patta* paintings should be seen in the context of national support of handicrafts all over India. My discussion will move back in time to discuss a parallel involvement with Indian art which took place amongst some of the Orientalists in the late 19th and early 20th century.

The collection of crafts which was part of the result of the Zealeys' involvement is also the subject of discussion as it throws light on the outlook of the collectors. The painters' account of the "revival" is examined, and the "revival" itself reconsidered. It is argued that even if the Zealeys initiated the "revival" the process and the consequent enhanced production most certainly would not have reached its present stage had it not been for the support of the state government. The latter part of the chapter considers the role of outsiders in "saving" the objects and cultures of others.

Outsiders take Interest in *Patta* Paintings

Philip and Halina Zealey came to Orissa in 1952 as Philip was the Director of a development project under "The American Friends Service Committee" (AFSC), a private, voluntary Quaker organisation founded in 1917[1]. During

1 The ASFC was carrying out a social and technical assistance program in the Barapali area of Orissa. This was a village project carried out in conjunction with the Indian and United States governments. It was an effort to introduce new agricultural practices and public health

the three years of their stay, the couple was involved with what can perhaps best be termed a "revival" of some of the Orissan craft traditions[2].

In June 1952 the anthropologist Professor Nirmal Kumar Bose introduced Halina and Philip Zealey to stone carvers and *patta* painters in the district of Puri[3]. The Zealeys were intrigued by what they saw and continued to see and purchase from the craftsmen during the rest of their stay in Orissa. It was, in particular, Halina who got involved with the *patta* painters and their work. In a report dated 26th March 1953, Halina Zealey informed AFSC of her impression of the work and the conditions of "Folk-painters and stone-carvers of Puri-district"[4]. AFSC sent off a copy of the report to W. Norman Brown of the South Asia Regional Studies of the University of Pennsylvania. Brown contacted Dr. Stella Kramrisch who offered to get the American Museums interested in buying some of the Orissan *patta* paintings (Das 1982:86)[5]. Scholars of international repute thus became members of the Orissan *patta* art world.

One of Halina Zealey's main concerns was to find a market for the images for "these painters are certainly making an interesting and valuable contribution to the Folk Art of Orissa and deserve assistance and

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schemes to an area of India which lagged behind other Indian states (personal communication with Jack Sutters of ASFC, September 1992).

2 This interest in crafts was not related to Philip Zealey's official work. After leaving Orissa in 1955, the Zealeys stayed elsewhere in India, until their (or was it only Halina Zealey's?) departure for England.

3 Professor Bose (1901-1972), of Calcutta University, was consulting social anthropologist for the American Friends Service committee's Orissa project (Zealey's report 1953:1). Bose was a very important figure in Indian anthropology, indicated by his inclusion in the "Bibliographies of Eminent Indian Anthropologists" (1974). Among other things he was active in the *Swadeshī* movement and acted as an interpreter to Mahatma Gandhi in the riot affected areas in Noakhali, East Bengal, in 1946-47. His various interests (and publications) include subjects as diverse as "anthropology, sociology, temple architecture, Gandhism, [and] human geography" (Ray 1974:61).

4 For sending a copy of which I thank Jack Sutters of AFSC.

5 Kramrisch was one of the scholars who continued a dominant view of Indian art elaborating a mythologising approach (Guha-Thakurta 1992:183-184).

encouragement" (Zealey, report 1953:3[6]). She thus acquired the role of an entrepreneur (Barth 1972:5-6). In the report she described how she and her husband found a "casual" market through their personal contacts but stressed that more permanent arrangements would be necessary for the future. She explained why such an arrangement was necessary:

> "The painters tend to be lazy, so far as marketing is concerned and have been relying on our interest and efforts too much. They are reluctant to do their own correspondence or make arrangements for packing and transport. We are gradually pushing them on this" (Zealey 1953:3).

In a search for more permanent outlets Halina Zealey contacted The Bengal Home Industries Association and The Indian Institute of Art in Industry. She also enquired about the possibility of having a showcase in the B.N.R Hotel (known as the South Eastern Railway Hotel) situated at the Puri beach as well as in the Raghunandan Library in Puri and a temporary stand during the main festival periods.

In August 1953 Philip and Halina Zealey met the Governor of Orissa, who arranged for them to meet the Chief Minister of Orissa, Naba Krishna Choudhury, to discuss with him the subject of market promotion for Orissan arts and crafts. When they met him they brought some paintings and stone carvings. At the request of the Chief Minister the Zealeys drafted a memorandum for the setting up of a small Artistic Crafts Marketing Organisation with the following aims:

> 1. To stimulate a wider interest and controlled marketing of craft products within Orissa.
>
> 2. To establish and consolidate markets in other parts of India and abroad.
>
> 3. To resuscitate existing craft production, to encourage adaptation to the needs of the modern market and to ensure the maintenance of high standards in quality.

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6 If nothing else is mentioned Zealey denotes Halina Zealey.

4. To encourage the employment of craftsmen in the decoration and fittings of public buildings.

5. To assist craftsmen in the procurement of raw material, of tools and equipment.

Although the memorandum was circulated among the members of the Cabinet and senior officials it would take some time before the objectives were met. The Orissa Cottage Industries Board, set up under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister, had not yet had its first meeting. However, on October 4, 1953 the Orissa Cottage Industries Board met and included Halina Zealey as a member. The Board moreover approved of her proposal to set up an Emporium (Das 1982:86-88)[7].

As far as Halina Zealey was concerned, finding a market was not the only problem. She felt that it was necessary to enhance the quality of the paintings:

> "The painters have been somewhat demoralised by the cheap pilgrim market in [sic] producing very inferior work. However, they are capable of producing very fine work - the best of its kind in the tradition" (Zealey 1953:3).

According to Zealey it was important to retain this endangered skill and in order to do this continuous encouragement was needed. What was also needed, as far as Zealey was concerned, was continuing guidance on what was saleable in the new market (ibid.:3).

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7 For the information on the meetings with ministers, the Orissa Handicraft Board and the memorandum, I rely entirely on the work of J.P. Das (1982). He was previously a senior officer of the Government of India and has worked with the Handicrafts Department of the Government of Orissa. This position has given him access to information which, in my experience, is not otherwise available. Unfortunately Das has disposed of all his notes and documents relating to the *Chitrakāras* of Orissa and I have therefore not seen the primary sources (personal communication from J.P. Das 1991). Should somebody manage to get through the bureaucratic machinery, I feel certain that these sources will prove to be very interesting material.

During their visits Halina and Philip Zealey repeatedly insisted that the painters should enhance the quality of their work. Halina Zealey noted:

> "The painters have learnt that we like good quality and a variety of subjects with decorative motifs. They learnt too, that we will pay a fair price, but are not fools, either, and prefer to have the proper price at once and not after 30 to 45 minutes of bargaining... ..When they realised the awakened interest in their work, the new paintings became more and more interesting and, after our continuous insistence on quality, more and more fine in execution....There are still loud conversations from time to time when work is neglected or when quality goes down shamelessly" (ibid.:2).

Halina and Philip Zealey clearly did not have any doubts about what "high quality" was and therefore did not bother to define what they meant by the term. From Halina Zealey's notes and report it seems that "high quality" in her opinion could be ascribed to meticulous work only[8]. In this respect her understanding of "high quality" is distinct from the local painters as well as some of the contemporary local art specialists. For the local painters, a painting to be considered of "high quality" must replicate already existing divine models as well as be executed with a high technical skill[9]. For several of the regional or local art specialists in Bhubaneshwar it is important that paintings adhere to a tradition not necessarily defined with reference to *patta* paintings, but Orissan arts and crafts more generally[10]. The point I wish to make is that a concept such as "high quality" is a contested term, having distinct meanings to the different members and layers of the art world.

Halina Zealey's concern for *patta* paintings was part of a broader concern for preserving the cultural heritage of India. Her report was introduced with a description of Orissan stone carvers and provides an idea of Zealey's outlook. She wrote:

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8 See chapter 3, figure 24 for a painting awarded by Zealey.

9 See chapter 5 for a discussion of the painters' evaluations of paintings.

10 See chapter 6 for a discussion of the aesthetics, priorities and evaluations of local art specialists.

> "It is unrealistic to imagine that a new age of temple building will come again. If, therefore, this rich cultural heritage of the Orissan people is to remain a living part of the modern State, steps must be taken to encourage and foster the work of those who still retain the artistic secrets of those forebears who enriched India, and the world, with the stone masterpieces of Konarak and Bhubaneswar" (ibid.:1).

This concern, with ensuring that traditions continue, was also the basis of an article by Philip Zealey, published in 1954. It is concerned with the revival of crafts taking place in Puri and surrounding villages such as Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi:

> "As the revitalisation and development of cottage industries is a subject of widespread interest just now, it may be of interest to recount the revival of some of the ancient temple crafts of Orissa" (P. Zealey 1954:795).

The "widespread interest" P. Zealey mentions, is a factor which must be taken into account in a discussion of the revival of *patta* paintings which took place at the beginning of the 1950s. We shall later consider to what extent a revival actually took place. The enhanced market for *patta* was partly the result of employment generating plans of the local Government. However, it should also be seen in relation to a broader concern with crafts in India in general, before, as well as after Independence, a matter to which we shall return shortly.

In the article "Revival of Artistic Crafts in Orissa" Philip Zealey describes his impression of the *Chitrakāra* caste and their work when he first came to Orissa (1954). According to him the painters had lost interest in painting due to a decreased demand for *pattas*. They had therefore turned to unskilled or semi-skilled labouring jobs for a livelihood. Moreover, their skill in painting had rapidly deteriorated "to a point where no son was interested in learning the craft from his father, so that one generation could see the end of one of Orissa's finest cultural heritages" (ibid.:795). The problem lay in awakening Orissa to a renewed interest and appreciation for

this work. A wider market had to be located and adaptations to a new clientele encouraged[11].

According to Philip Zealey full employment to some thirty households of painters and partial employment for many more were amongst the results of the involvement of the local Government (ibid.:795). The article does not provide any information on exactly how many active *patta* painters one could find in the district of Puri in 1952. Still, the impression conveyed of the situation in 1950 is that of a craft disappearing due to a lack of interested customers, whereas in 1955 not less than thirty households in the district of Puri were employed full-time making crafts. This might, of course, be the result of biased writing, however, as we shall see later the painters of Puri district remember the Zealey period as the time when several painter households took up their traditional metier. Philip Zealey moreover, found that the quality of the paintings had improved:

> "The quality of workmanship has been steadily improving and the best work now compares favourably with museum pieces painted thirty or more years ago" (ibid.:795).

Here Zealey clearly records the manner in which museum pieces were seen as ideals to which contemporary paintings aspired. This idealisation mirrors the arguments of Orientalists who were involved with Indian crafts in the late 19th and early 20th century, as well as today's local art specialists.

In the last part of the article Philip Zealey describes how the Government of Orissa (some time after the Zealeys' memorandum had been passed around) set up an Arts and Crafts Centre to expand and develop the craft production, which had come to attract international orders, as well as orders from other Indian states. He concluded the article stressing the need for official concern with disappearing Indian crafts:

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11 Philip Zealey noted the necessity of "....encouraging adaptations for the production of articles with an appeal in the modern home" (1954:795).

> "It would seem that there are many ancient artistic crafts in India which are fast disappearing for the lack of market promotion and guidance in adaptation to new needs. It is to be hoped that the newly formed All-India Handicrafts board will be able to save some of these dying crafts before it is too late" (ibid.:795).

The National Concern for Handicrafts

To understand the concerns of Halina and Philip Zealey it is necessary to look at the context in which they were working. At the time Philip Zealey worked in Orissa, the Government of India was involved in supporting the production of handicrafts all over India. This concern was, among other things, embodied in the creation of the All India Handicraft Board (AIHB) in November 1952[12] - one and a half years before Philip Zealey wrote his article on the revival of *patta* paintings. We shall take a look at some of the reasons for official interest in handicraft production.

The mandate of AIHB was to advise the Central Government on the problems confronting the development and progress of handicrafts, including problems of skill formation, production, techniques, and marketing at home and abroad. The board was headed by a Development Commissioner and in 1988 it was still under the Ministry of Commerce (Kathuria 1988:4). In 1992 it functioned as an advisory body and developed guidelines and schemes to be implemented at state level.

Under the constitution of India, the development of industries is the responsibility of state governments and is looked after by the respective Directorates of Industry. Moreover, most states have set up development corporations, either exclusively for handicrafts or for both handlooms and handicrafts, to help artisans in production and marketing (ibid.:4).

12 In 1981 the All India Handicrafts Board was reconstituted as the All India Handlooms and Handicrafts Board to render joint advice on both handlooms as well as handicrafts.

Part of the national Government's interest in the development of the handicraft sector lay in its potential as an employment generating industry. In the 122nd Report of the Lok Sabha Secretariat, November 1982, the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament stated:

> "...the primary task of the Board was to make handicrafts an effective instrument for reducing unemployment and under-employment among artisans and to promote economic independence and social status and individual dignity of craftsmen. The Committee regrets that the Board has not been able to achieve any concrete results in this regard" (ibid:135).

At a local state level, this social and economic concern is reflected in the schemes of the Orissan Directorate of Handicrafts and Cottage Industries. Before we look at them, however, the structure of the system needs to be outlined[13].

Figure 10: The Official Indian Handicraft Structure (1992)

National level:	A1	Ministry of textiles
	A2	Development Commissioner of Handicraft
State level:	B1	Government Department of Handicraft and Cottage Industry
	B2	Directorate of Handicraft and Cottage Industries:
	B3	Orissa State Cooperative Handicraft Corporation
	B4	*Utkalika*[14]
	B5	State Handicraft Design centre + State Institute of Handicraft Training
District level:	C1	District Industries Centre:
	C2	Cooperatives
	C3	Rural artisans
		Household units

13 In order to make the model as simple as possible it only contains institutions of relevance to the local production of *patta* paintings and the general argument.

14 *Utkalikā* is a chain of shops under the Orissa State Co-operative Handicrafts Corporation (a Government of Orissa undertaking). Branches can be found in New Delhi, Calcutta, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Bhubaneshwar, Cuttack, Puri, Sambalpur, Jeypore, Angul and Rourkela.

At the national level, general schemes are developed to be implemented at state level. A scheme passes from the Development Commissioner of Handicraft (A2) via the State Government Department of Handicraft and Cottage Industry (B1) to the Directorate of Handicraft and Cottage Industries (B2). In theory a central plan can be rejected if the Directorate of Handicraft and Cottage Industries (B2) deems it inappropriate. However, in general, Central plans are adopted, among other things, because the centre provides 50% of the costs. The plans are implemented via the District Industries Centre (C1), an organisation which deals directly with the cooperatives and individual artisans.

There are three types of schemes:

1. A central scheme or plan developed at national level and implemented at state level.

2. A joint project plan where the centre pays part of the expenses.

3. Schemes designed at state level by the Directorate of Handicraft and Cottage Industries.

Some schemes are designed to support cooperatives[15], others are concerned with the individual artisans who, for example, are offered loans or support to build a room in which they can work. There are also schemes which aim to expose handicraft productions via exhibitions and some which are concerned with the improvement of marketing.

On the basis of the above data it would be wrong to conclude that the national government's concern is solely with the potential social and economic benefits of supporting Indian handicrafts. Rather than simply being motivated by social and economic benefits, we need to understand this support as part of a much broader "Indian" handicraft ideology.

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15 The cooperative in Raghurājpur is a result of such a scheme.

The Past in the Present

Both state and national propaganda intended for internal and international consumers place great emphasis on the pervasiveness of the past within the present. One crucial feature of this elite discourse is to stress the unbroken tradition: the abundance of Master Craftsmen mystically in touch with the spiritual heritage of India. This is clearly apparent in one of the contemporary folders advertising Orissan handicrafts.

Utkalikā (B4) in Bhubaneshwar advertises its handicraft products in a folder printed in colour on high quality paper. *Patta chitra* is one of the crafts advertised, in a style not unlike that of many recipe books: "The speciality of "Patachitra" [sic] is its native character". A wheel of Konarak temple decorates the front page of the folder[16]. Under the heading "A Rich Cultural Heritage" three paragraphs introduce the reader to the Orissan production of crafts. To ensure that the significance of the wheel is not lost the folder informs the reader about its symbolic meaning:

> "The Konark Sun temple and the Rath Yatra Festival in Puri symbolises the **pristine** glory of Orissa's cultural heritage and the profound spirit of her people. Besides attracting the millions of devotees each year, monuments like these are a constant source of inspiration for the numerous master craftsmen to motivate their **indulgence** in such art and craft which have made Orissa world famous" (Folder, no pagination, my emphasis).

Part of what matters here is the projection of a particular image of Orissa, as a State with distinctive spiritual and artistic traditions rooted in the past. The choice of vocabulary in the quote is significant. "Pristine" for example allows for at least two interpretations and thus makes it possible for the folder to insist that the cultural heritage of Orissa is "original", involving the earliest period, as well as pure or uncorrupted.

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16 The wheel's relation to the past is no doubt significant here. However, just as significant is, perhaps, the associations brought forward by the symbolic use of a wheel ever since Gandhi chose to use a spinning wheel as the symbol of Congress and rural self-sufficiency.

The description of Konarak as a constant source of inspiration is an ideal of the local elite of the art world and has no basis in the actual life of the craftsmen. Several of the painters can not afford to pay the fare of Rs. 10 to go to Konarak and if they go, it is not to gain inspiration from the sight[17]. The use of the concept of "indulgence" is equally significant and suggests a luxurious moment of pure aesthetic activity. The Master Craftsman is presented as someone who is wholly committed to what he is doing and knowledgable about the historical tradition of which he consciously feels himself to be a part. As we shall see in chapters 5 and 6 this idealised model of the Master Craftsman does not fit with local practise. It is a regional elite's hypostatisation of the actual pragmatic choices and practices of local crafts people. The folder continues:

> "The Master Craftsmen and women, who have kept alive the glorious **fidelity** of the ancient Oriya culture over the ages, are the **torch-bearers** of this creative skill in today's context" (ibid., my emphasis).

Another crucial concept - that of "fidelity" - is used to inform the reader how Orissan culture is part of an unbroken tradition. The use of the metaphor "torch-bearers" is indicative suggesting that contemporary Orissa would be left in darkness were it not for the glow of ancient Oriya culture. The folder continues:

> "Remaining close to the depictions in **Purans** and **Vedas**, the master craftsmen base their design forms as well as colour schemes on the fabulously imaginative **cosmographic myths** and **legends** dating back to the **Indo-Aryan** [sic.] era" (ibid., my emphasis).

The desire to emphasise the closeness of contemporary production with an unbroken tradition is particularly evident in this quote. The sentence is thick with signifiers of this tradition: "*purānas*", "Vedas", "cosmographic myths" and "legends" and the "Indo-Aryan era". This concern mirrors the attempt

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17 I once went with three stone carvers who participated in a fair arranged by D.I.C. (C1) The fair was next to the Konarak temple but even so the craftsmen preferred to chat in the stall rather than see the temple.

at "folk-Sanskritisation" taking place at the national layer of the art world to be discussed in chapter 6.

However, establishing a direct life line to the past through the Master Craftsmen makes it necessary for Utkalikā to stress that things did not stop then:

> "But it is not as if the clock stopped ages ago. Progress and development have been the hallmark of folk art whose exquisite finish has been mesmerising" (ibid.).

Progress as well as development have been key words in the official language and politics of the national government ever since Independence as apparent, for example, in the five year plans.

The last quote indicates that the elite discourses concerned integrate current development within the over-arching paradigm of tradition. This discourse is essentially commercial aiming to show how quality endures. It is also pragmatic and attempts to accommodate change and innovation within tradition. In this respect the official state discourse diverges somewhat from the museological nostalgia, preoccupied with disappeared ideal forms, which characterised the allied discourse of Halina Zealey.

One more example will suffice to illustrate that the official interest in handicrafts is more than just concerned with the economics and generation of employment.

A folder concerned with "National Awards for Master Craftspersons and Weavers"[18] is introduced with a photo of a tablet which according to the accompanying text illustrates the "origin of the crafts persons and architects from the 'face' and 'mind' of the Supreme Principle". It has been adapted

18 Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) and Office of the Development Commissioner (Handlooms). Ministry of Textiles, GOI, 1990.

for the presentation of the National Awards to Master Crafts Persons and Weavers. The text describing the tablet is followed by a quote by A.K. Coomaraswamy:

> "..it has only been when the craftsman has had the right to work, the right to work faithfully, a right to the due reward of this labour, and at the same time a conscious or subconscious faith in a social and spiritual significance of his work, that his art has possessed the elements of real greatness.
>
> The craftsman is not an individual expressing individual whims, but a part of the universe, giving expression to ideals of eternal beauty and unchanging laws, even as do the trees and flowers whose natural and less ordered beauty is not less God given" (GOI 1990).

Of all the scholars of the early 20th century concerned with Indian arts and crafts, it was Coomaraswamy who most explicitly presented the metaphysical image of Indian art which had developed since the 1850s and this view of Indian art has been continued more recently in the writing of the late Stella Kramrisch (Guha-Thakurta 1992: 183-84). It was one of her aims to demonstrate how Indian painting, sculpture and temple architecture were all based on higher "Sanskrit" principles. As we shall see in chapter 6 the ideas of Coomaraswamy, later echoed in the work of Kramrisch, are also evident in contemporary writing on Indian arts and crafts.

Coomaraswamy was one of several scholars concerned with Indian arts and crafts in his time. Before discussing some of the Orientalists and their involvement, a few words need to be said with respect to Halina Zealey's report and Philip Zealey's article which introduced this chapter. Seen in the context of the national government and its interest in handicraft production manifested in the creation of AIHB, it is evident that Halina and Philip Zealeys' concern was not the result of haphazard, and whimsical ideas. Seen in this light her report and his article exemplify just how pervasive and strong the Indian handicraft ideology already was. That it has continued till today is apparent in the leaflets referred to above, as well as in some of the undertakings arranged by the Indian Government. Brian Durrans, for

example, has argued that the Festival of India[19] was a complex piece of ideological apparatus, not concerned with India in a direct sense, but about an image of India. He writes:

> "Nothing could be more suitable to counter this image[20] than that of India as a 'special case', with distinctive spiritual traditions rooted in the continuity of village life; of handicrafts, embodying qualities of pan-Indianness which remain transcendentally secure beyond space and time; and the evidence of modern science and technology, shown as controlled and socially beneficial, in pointed contrast with the experiences of some other countries" (Durrans 1982:17).

Orientalists and their Involvement with Indian Arts and Crafts

In their involvement with the Orissan *patta* paintings, Halina and Philip Zealey followed an earlier line of figures such as Owen Jones, Henry Cole, George Birdwood and James Fergusson. In the 1850s they occupied different positions as industrial designers, education-authorities, museum keepers, art administrators and experts and had thus, in different ways, been involved with art in general in India. Under their initiative and authority, Indian art was reconstructed and revived, for display in exhibitions and museums, in a search for new cultural roots in the Empire in the post-mutiny period. This Orientalist establishment served as a base for the later involvement of figures such as E.B. Havell and A.K. Coomaraswamy (Guha-Thakurta 1992:146-7).

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19 The Festival of India held in Britain and the United States in 1982 and 1985 respectively were just two of the state-sponsored craft festivals held by the Indian Government in close collaboration with the Governments of the countries visited. Others were "Shilpakar: Continuing Traditions of Indian Craftsmen" in Soviet Union in 1986-87, "Five Indian Craftsmen" in Sweden in 1987 and "The Tribal Arts of India" in Japan in 1988. These festivals, some of which included demonstrations of craft making by Indian artisans, were all part of the Indian Government's aim to project a favourable view of Indian traditions abroad. For a discussion of aspects of the Festival of India held in the United States see Kurin (1991:315-43) and for a discussion of the ideological aspects of the Festival held in Britain in 1982, see Durrans (1982, 1992).

20 According to Durrans, the Western preconception of India highlights mass poverty and the problems of development (Durrans 1982:17).

The writings of Birdwood and, later, Coomaraswamy reflect an understanding of the Indian craftsman as someone working in an idyllic homogenous village context producing objects, whose beauty is rooted in this organicism.

In 1880 Birdwood describes the lives of village artisans before they left their "democratic village communities ....[for] the colossal mills of Bombay" (1880:136). Birdwood writes:

> "Outside the entrance of the single village street, on an exposed rise of ground, the hereditary potter sits by his wheel moulding the swift revolving clay by the natural curves of his hands. At the back of the houses, which form the low irregular street, there are two or three looms at work in blue and scarlet and gold, the frames hanging between the acacia trees, the yellow flowers of which drop fast on the webs as they are being woven. In the street the brass and copper smiths are hammering away at their pots and pans; and further down, in the verandah of the rich man's house, is the jeweller working rupees and gold mohrs into fair jewelry, gold and silver earrings, and round tires like the moon, bracelets and tablets and nose rings, and tinkling ornaments for the feet, taking his designs from the fruits and flowers around him, or from the traditional forms represented in the paintings and carvings of the great temple, which rises over the grove of mangoes and palms at the end of the street above the lotus-covered village tank. At half-past three or four in the afternoon the whole street is lighted up by the moving robes of the women going down to draw water from the tank, each with two or three water jars on her head: and so, while they are going and returning in single file, the scene glows like Titian's canvas, and moves like the stately procession of the Panathenaic frieze. Later the men drive in the mild grey kine from the moaning plain, the looms are folded up, the coppersmiths are silent, the elders gather in the gate, the lights begin to glimmer in the fast-falling darkness, the feasting and the music are heard on every side, and late into the night the songs are sung from the Ramayana or Mahabharata. The next morning with sunrise, after the simple ablutions and adorations performed in the open air before the houses, the same day begins again. This is the daily life going on all over Western India in the village communities of the Dakhan, among a people happy in their simple manners and frugal way of life, and in the culture derived from the grand epics of a religion in which they live and move and have their daily being, and in which the highest expression of their literature, art, and civilisation has been stereotyped for 3,000 years" (ibid.:135-136).

31 years after this piece was first written[21] Coomaraswamy, in his book "The Indian Craftsman", included an appendix by Birdwood on "The Indian Village Potter":

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21 It was first published in a handbook printed in connection with the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878 (Birdwood 1878).

> "He [the potter] is, in truth, one of the most useful and respected members of the community, and in the happy religious organization village life there is no man happier than the hereditary potter,...
>
> 'Are not these the conditions under which popular art and song have everywhere sprung, and which are everywhere found essential to the preservation of their pristine purity? To the Indian land and village system we owe altogether the hereditary cunning of the Hindu handicraftsman. It has created for him simple plenty, and a scheme of democratic life, in which all are co-ordinate parts of one undivided and indivisible whole, the provision and respect due to every man in it being enforced under the highest religious sanctions, and every calling perpetuated from father to son by those cardinal obligations on which the whole hierarchy of Hinduism hinges'" (Coomaraswamy 1909:99).

Birdwood's description of the potter fitted in neatly with Coomaraswamy's idea of the Indian "craftsman as an organic element in the national life" (ibid.:1). To Coomaraswamy it was "the presence of the craftsmen in the midst of a simple agricultural society [which] made possible the self-contained life of the community." (ibid.:4). This community was "organised on the basis of personal relations and duties, which descended in each family from generation to generation, instead of belonging to a society founded on contract and competition, their [the craftsmen's] payment was provided for in various ways, of which money payment was the least important and most unusual..." (ibid.:4).

The quotes from Birdwood and Coomaraswamy illustrate a strong traditionalism which sanctions an imaginary harmonious rural way of life which is threatened by the evils of industrialisation and modern individualism[22]. The beauty of Indian artisans' work is conceived as rooted in an organic village context.

It is, perhaps, not surprising to find this attitude amongst writers in the late 19th century and early 20th century. However, as we shall see in chapter

22 Coomaraswamy notes: "Modern individualism....hesitates to interfere with a man's sacred individual liberty to make things as badly as he likes, and to undermine the trade of his fellows on that basis" (1909:64).

6, it is not confined to a long lost past but thrives amongst contemporary art specialists.

Coomaraswamy's interest was not limited to the craft objects and their beauty per se. During the first decade of the 20th century Coomaraswamy and Havell became the most influential exponents of a rich Indian art tradition with a sublime spiritual aesthetic which, they claimed, was uniquely Eastern. Ideas of "art", "tradition" and "Indian-ness" were meshed to project an image of India as an abstracted, essentialist entity, encapsulated within an idealised past (Guha-Thakurta 1992:148). Craftsmanship became "a mode of thought" and a whole way of life. For Havell in particular, the revival of Indian handicrafts became a crucial ideological issue. In design and handicrafts he saw the only living art of India which kept alive tradition and still had a natural and spontaneous growth (ibid.:151). While acknowledging the artistic merits of traditional design, Havell was concerned to ensure the commercial feasibility of their revival. To bridge this dichotomy, he was aware that craft policies in India would have to progress beyond mere documentation and circulation of traditional designs to wider economic protection and patronage of handicraft industries (ibid.:153).

Havell's previously exclusive interest in Indian design and crafts gradually changed to Indian "fine arts". To initiate Indian art students in Oriental and decorative art traditions Havell, among other things, wanted to fill the Government Art Gallery with samples of Ajanta and Mughal paintings.

Coomaraswamy as well as Havell aimed to defend what they saw as the "superior" and "separate aesthetics" of Indian art. In order to do this they were drawn to Neo-Platonic arguments about the primacy of the idea behind sensuous appearance and of the ideal behind the illusory trappings of the real (ibid.:162).

To varying degrees Coomaraswamy, Havell and Birdwood had a single coherent art world in mind when they discussed "Indian art". Occasionally, however, they would talk about distinct perceptions. This is most obvious in Coomaraswamy's concluding remarks in a chapter on "reactions to art in India":

> "To sum up, it will be seen that everyone is thought of as making use of the work in art in his own way, the work of visual art, no less than a word, being a kāma-dhenu, yielding to the spectator just what he seeks from it or is capable of understanding.....We ought then, to appreciate Indian art from every point of view, to be equipped with learning, piety, sensibility, knowledge of technique, and simplicity..." (Coomaraswamy 1934:108-109).

It was not only intellectuals but also contemporary missionaries who argued for different usage and the necessity of different levels of understanding. An example is the book "The gods of India" by the missionary Osborne Martin (1913). He argues that Hindu intellectuals do not commit idolatry, but use images as a means to transcendental ends, whereas the common people use images as idols (Martin 1913:201-202).

In this case, Martin attempted to define how different sections of society used objects differently and attached different belief systems to them. Attention was thus paid to different art worlds in earlier Western writing about non-Western art forms. These insights receded in later anthropological writing.

Not everybody agreed with Havell. Birdwood, for example, criticised him and denied the existence of fine arts in India. Even if there was thus a diversity of ideas amongst the Orientalists, by 1910, their discourses not only reasserted the glorious past of Indian art but also managed to attribute to it a present-day "national" identity (ibid.:165).

The ideas of Havell and Coomaraswamy had significance, not only for arts and crafts of India, but also for wider nationalist concerns. Craftsmanship came to symbolise a preservation of identity and independence. The interest

in crafts merged with the notion of a "great art" heritage where art was equated with the highest realms of religion and philosophy and the loftiest aspects of national culture[23] (ibid.:169).

It is against this historical background that Indian government institutions' use of Coomaraswamy must be seen. The references quoted earlier to "the pristine glory of Orissa's cultural heritage", "the glorious fidelity of the ancient Oriya culture", and "fabulously imaginative cosmographic myths and legends dating back to the Indo-Aryan era" are concerned with more than commercial advertisements of handicrafts. The use of Coomaraswamy as well as the particular choice of vocabulary are part of the construction of an ideal image of Orissa.

In their concern for the continuation and marketability of the Orissan *patta* paintings Halina and Philip Zealey thus trod a path initiated by the Orientalist establishment, and in particular, Havell, decades earlier. But there were also significant differences. The Zealeys were pursuing a parallel set of concerns but articulated through the study of locally produced objects. This would conventionally and museologically be described as material culture. However, beyond this, in the ethnographic document, one sees Coomaraswamy-like concerns with authenticity[24]. At this level the difference thus collapses - for the Zealeys the objects become simply a vehicle for enduring spiritual traditions.

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23 For a detailed discussion and analysis of the ideas of Havell and Coomaraswamy and the Orientalist establishment in general see Guha-Thakurta (1992: 146-184).

24 I have adopted Spooner's definition of authenticity. "Authenticity", says Spooner, "is a conceptualization of elusive, inadequately defined, other cultural, socially ordered genuineness" (1986:225).

The Zealey Collection

In 1976 Mrs Zealey visited the British Museum and offered to sell her collection of various crafts and items in a letter written to the Director of the Museum. This letter provides an idea of the paradigm which structured the undertaking of the collection.

The first part of the letter is concerned with Zealey's idea to arrange an "exhibition [...] parallel [to] the second showing of the 'Disappearing World' television series.." (Zealey 1976a:1-2)[25]. Zealey was aware of the museum's possession of "a lot of material that could be the foundation of the 'Disappearing World' Exhibition" (ibid.:1) and suggested that the museum undertake the exhibition. In the second part of the letter Zealey offers some objects for sale:

> "I am in possession of a few objects from a world that has already disappeared - Three samples from the Western Ukraine...one Indian tribal art object made by tribes that have died out... and a few excellent examples of authentic Orissan craft-art" (ibid.:2).

What is apparent in the letter is Zealey's wish to save "authentic" crafts from destructive historical change. This way of looking at the world - known as the "salvage paradigm" - has in the last decade, been the focus of debate and will be the subject of discussion in the last part of the chapter.

The collection was purchased by the Museum of Mankind in 1977[26]. It

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25 Zealey had apparently suggested this to Robert Skelton, former Keeper of the Indian Department, Victoria and Albert Museum and had been asked to put it in writing.

26 Personal communication from Brian Durrans, Deputy Keeper, Museum of Mankind, London, Spring 1992. For someone who is not a museum specialist the collection is a peculiar mix of things and one wonders with which criteria Halina Zealey collected the items in the first place. The purchase of the collection by the British Museum is of course an official recognition of her choices. It is striking that several of the people (of various backgrounds) I spoke with in Orissa found it hard to believe that a big museum in London would want to keep an old

covers a broad spectrum of things mainly from India (in particular Puri district), but also a few items from what was then South Eastern Poland[27]. Supplementary documentation, supplied by Zealey, describing the items, and in particular the notes she added, give further insights into the spirit with which Zealey collected the items[28]. A string of beads is accompanied by the following comment:

> "Poor Tibetan woman's beads - again I got them from poor refugee women who sold their rough turquoise pieces for want of food. I am adding an authentic mother of pearl bead I found in the bazaar and a broken agate bead only to help to keep in mind that Tibetan traditional art and way of life are fast disappearing, like Kashmiri go[?]d painting" (Ethnographic Document 1976b:10).

A metal toe-ring, of a size and design which according to Zealey was no longer worn in Orissa after the 1950s, was collected from the *Shāsana* village of Birapratāppur during their stay in Puri (1952-55). Zealey commented on her purchase:

> "I bought it straight off a toe of a very old woman. She was delighted. So was I" (ibid.:9).

In Puri Zealey had also purchased a granite carving of *Hanumān* from an old stone carver. Zealey added to the information given in the document:

> "He considered the *Hanumān* needing more finish and polish, but it was obvious that he was too old and shaky to handle such a hard stone. I bought it as it was to save it from possible destruction"[29] (ibid.:7).

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broken clay tea pot and a metal toe ring to mention just a few examples.

27 According to Brian Durrans and Jagannātha Das, (ex-designer of the Handicraft complex, Bhubaneshwar), the latter who worked with Philip and Halina Zealey during their stay in Puri, they were of Polish origin.

28 Before the collection was actually transferred from Halina Zealey's home to the museum, Brian Durrans had asked her to comment on the accuracy and completeness of the ethnographic documentation which had been taken down fairly hurriedly in the form of notes (letter from Durrans sent to Zealey 8. September, 1976).

29 The Museum of Mankind did not wish to keep the *Hanumān* figure as part of the collection because the "V & A has plenty" (Ethnographic Documentary Library 1964, British Museum).

What runs through these quotes is Halina Zealey's concern with saving what would otherwise disappear, be it Tibetan traditional art, Orissan metal toe-rings or a *Hanumān* figurine carved in stone. This obsession with saving items or making sure that their production continues is most probably also what caused Zealey to engage herself in a revival of the declining craft of *patta* painting.

According to the document, another stone object - carved from a single block of red sandstone acquired from the ruins of Konarak temple - was made by a "direct descendant of original Konarak carvers" in 1954. To this information Zealey added:

> "The elder brother of Bhubaneshwara [the carver] is the best traditional [sculptor] of India, made the Professor of Sculpture at Lucknow Academy of Art in Uttar Pradesh by Rabindranāth Tagore [sic]" (ibid.:7).

To Zealey however, it was the authenticity of an object, rather than an official acknowledgement of the craftsman, which was important. In her notes on a dowry box from Puri she wrote:

> "Absolutely authentic, I found them on my first visit to the black potter's house[30]" (ibid.:6).

Zealey did not specify what she meant by "authentic" but her writing conveys the impression that to Zealey "authentic" denoted "original". Two robes originally belonging to a Nāgā chief provoked the following comment:

> "Once a *Nāgā* chief visited my home and confirmed total authenticity of the robes by wanting to take them down to show us how he wears them" (ibid.:4).

30 I do not know what Halina Zealey meant when she wrote black potter.

The quotes illustrate that the degree of authenticity of the objects she purchased must have been important to Zealey[31].

The collection also has a couple of Orissan cloth paintings (painted on plain cotton) and it is noted in the Ethnographic Document that: "Mrs. Zealey has been responsible for encouraging this non-traditional vehicle for local Chittrokaro [sic] painting, as a means of obtaining examples outside temple context". It is surprising that Zealey, who clearly was concerned with authenticity, did not ask the painters to prepare the traditional carrier *patti* for the paintings she ordered.

Commenting on a pair of *patta* paintings made by Benu Mahāranā[32], a *Chitrakāra* who according to Zealey was held in low esteem by other *Chitrakāras* due to his crude style, Zealey noted:

> "He was 80 when he painted them 20 years ago. He had no son nor apprentice. This example of 'crude' Orissan style of painting is finished in Orissa as far as I know" (ibid.:4).

The apparent disappearance of a "crude" style of painting was due not least to a new clientele, of which Zealey, of course, was part. Whereas pilgrims had favoured the informative iconic aspect of *pattas* the new customers (whether they were Indian or foreign) emphasised the style[33].

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31 This makes it the more entertaining to read the following note in the Ethnographic Document: "Two robes originally belonging to Naga chiefs. Ikat-dyed and embroidered with bold zoomorphic and other motifs, using long floating threads of different colours. Each robe currently enlarged for use as curtains by addition of brown coloured strips. One robe considerably damaged through attempt at dry cleaning" (ibid.:4).

32 Zealey described the material as resembling linoleum. This is an example of how we continuously draw on well-known phenomena in our own cultural environment when trying to understand that of others.

33 This is further discussed in the last part of the chapter, with reference to Nietch's work (1983).

However, the style of the paintings Zealey described as crude is not unlike the style employed in the majority of contemporary *patās* made for worship[34]. It is thus, unlikely, that this style of painting should have disappeared when Zealey wrote her notes in 1976. This misconception is almost certainly a result of a failure to distinguish between *pattas* made for tourist consumption and those made for worship, a matter we shall briefly attend to in the last part of the chapter. Zealey is not likely to have seen the latter, which are only made on particular days during the ritual cycle.

One of the paintings in the collection is of particular interest here - a *patta* depicting *Ganesh* as he appears in his five headed manifestation. Zealey has added some information to the Ethnographic document:

> "Ganesh with five heads and ten hands - in his mightiest appearance is painted by most respected Chittrokaro Jaggarnath Mahapatro; living in Rajpur village [sic], next door to Birapratapapur village where Panu, Raghu and Rama Mahāranā brothers[35] live (if they are still alive). He is respected for the purity of style and fineness of the brush-strokes" (ibid.:3).

Among other things this piece of information is interesting for the light it throws on the change which Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi have undergone. In the 1950s it was Dānda Sāhi rather than Raghurājpur which was well known. With this painting Jagannātha Mahāpātra got his first award acknowledging his skill as a *patta* painter. Just before the Zealeys were transferred to Delhi, Halina Zealey held an exhibition in the Senate Hall of the Utkal University in Cuttack. As on previous occasions she had decided to announce an award for what she thought to be the best painting and her choice was Jagannātha Mahāpātra's *Ganesh patta* (see chapter 3, figure 24).

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34 For examples of *patās* made for worship see chapter 3, section III. *Patās* are furthermore discussed in chapter 4.

35 Zealey here refers to Panu (E.1.), Rāma (E.2.), and Raghu (E.3.) Mahāranā mentioned in chapter 1.

There are seven other *pattas* in the Zealey collection all made in the beginning of the 1950s[36]. Unfortunately Zealey has not noted the names of the painters, but in one case a painter, Raghu Mahāranā (E.3.) from Dānda Sāhi, has written his name under the lotus flower on which *Krishna* stands.

The Zealey collection is not the only trace left of Halina and Philip Zealey's involvement with Indian crafts. Halina Zealey in particular has left a noticeable impression on the *Chitrakāras* of the district of Puri. It is she, rather than her husband, who plays an important role in the *patta* painters' account of the "revival" of *patta* paintings.

The Painters Account of the Time before and after the "Revival"

During my stay the painters described how, whenever Halina Zealey paid Raghurājpur a visit, a message went from household to household that *Lakshmi*, the goddess of prosperity, had come. When people say that *Lakshmi* has come to their house they mean to indicate that they have received some financial advantage. It is revealing that Zealey was referred to as *Lakshmi* and not only due to her continuous purchase of paintings of various qualities[37]. The fact that the painters repeatedly mentioned this in 1991 and 1992 indicates that Zealey was seen as the one who brought wealth to the village also on a long term basis.

The time before Zealey came was remembered as one of hardship. The painters blamed middlemen as being responsible for the cause of their difficulties. According to the painters, some of them used to exchange rice

36 The charge for reproductions made it impossible to include these *patta* paintings from the Zealey collection.

37 The painters stressed that Zealey bought whatever they painted and thus encouraged them to enhance their production. However, she was, as already mentioned, concerned with quality and paid most for what she considered high quality work. It is not clear what she did with the purchases which are not part of the Zealey collection.

for paintings and one of them, called Ananta Mohanty, in particular gave loans when a *Chitrakāra* household was in need. This enabled him to file suits against *Chitrakāras* if they had not been able to repay their debts.

Prints and Decline

At some point the *Chitrakāras* wanted to organise a cooperative in an aim to free themselves from their dependence upon middlemen. However, Ananta Mohanty gave cash advances to *Chitrakāras* for supply of *jātri pattis* and told the illiterate painters to sign notes stating that they owed him money - a move which enabled him to file suits against them. Some *Chitrakāras* in Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi who could not pay their debt lost their homesteads to the middleman and ended up living as tenants in what had previously been their own houses.

Furthermore Ananta Mohanty ordered a printing press in Calcutta to reproduce a *patta* depicting *Balabhadra, Subhadrā* and *Jagannātha*, in the temple of *Jagannātha* made by the *patta* painter Kelu Mahāranā from Dānda Sāhi[38]. Due to their cheap price the prints became very popular with pilgrims and resulted in a decrease in the demand for hand painted *jātri pattis*.

The consequence of the popularity of these prints was that most painters lost their source of livelihood and thus had to work in the fields as daily labourers. They did, however, still make paintings for worship for their *Brahmin* patrons, as well as for temples[39], but the main income came from

38 The painters do not know which studio it was. In Das' discussion of the "revival" of *patta* paintings he refers to the setting up of the Calcutta Art Studio (1878), but it is by no means clear whether this was the studio which later reproduced the *patta* paintings by chromolithographs. Das simply writes that Calcutta by the early years of the 20th century had its own press for chromolithograph printing, without connecting this information with his description of the Calcutta Art Studio (1982:83).

39 This is discussed in detail in chapter 4.

other kinds of employment. Many years passed before Zealey came and initiated the process of revival of *patta* paintings. According to the painters this process would never have happened had it not been for Zealey[40].

When Zealey came in 1950 she encouraged the *patta* painters to begin painting again. She wanted "quality art" and paid more for paintings with fine lines. According to the painters in Raghurājpur the painters in Dānda Sāhi tried to hide the fact that there also were painters in Raghurājpur. They wanted to keep Zealey to themselves. When Zealey realised there were also painters in Raghurājpur, the painters in Dānda Sāhi insulted them by asking who would take care of the betel fields if they were to start painting. That was when the *Chitrakāras* of Raghurājpur went to Jagannātha Mahāpātra who worked as a director of a theatre group in Puri to ask him to return to Raghurājpur and take up painting again[41]. He soon began to teach other people to paint.

The painters' accounts raise three questions. Firstly, there is the middleman. Who was he and is it likely that he played such an important role as the painters described? Secondly, there are the prints. Which press in Calcutta produced these prints? Thirdly, there is the concept of "revival". Were the *patta* paintings actually resuscitated, i.e. had they not been made for some time prior to Zealey's arrival?

In order to answer the first question, we shall turn to Das' work on the Puri paintings (1982). Das describes in detail the deeds of the middleman Ananta Mohanty and the consequences for the *Chitrakāras*. In the last part of the 19th century *patta* paintings were sold mainly in a shop known as

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40 The fact that the painters give Zealey, rather than the government, the credit is not surprising. It is unlikely that they have been informed about the meetings and actions taken by the institutions of the Indian Government, whereas they often had encounters with Zealey.

41 Jagannātha Mahāpātra's background as a director of a theatre group which performed plays concerned with the epics and *purānas* has had a profound influence on his career as a *patta* painter. The importance of textual knowledge for *patta* painting is discussed in chapter 6.

"*Chitrapati-mahal*" ("picture palace") situated on the premises of the *Jagannātha* temple. The right to use the shop was auctioned to the highest bidder by the temple authorities. If *Chitrakāras* wished to sell paintings independently of the shop they had to get permission from the Temple manager's office. According to Das, the middleman Ananta Mohanty was the lease holder of the shop for several years and had established himself as the chief middleman-buyer of paintings made by the *Chitrakāras* of Raghurājpur, Dānda Sāhi and Puri. That was just one of his many money making activities. He owned several shops and buildings in Puri and was a familiar figure in the Puri Civil Court, where he filed suits against people who could not repay their loans (Das 1982:82). According to Das the court records during the period (1904-1910) show several cases filed by Ananta Mohanty against *Chitrakāras* for recovery of money due on account of house rent, mortgage and burden of debt (ibid.:83). The court cases suggest that the middleman referred to by the painters actually played a very important role in the lives of the *Chitrakāras*[42].

The Production of Popular Prints in Calcutta

The prints - whether they were made by The Calcutta Art Studio or not - did of course have consequences for the *patta* painters. Even though they might not have caused a total decline of *patta* paintings many pilgrims, who would otherwise have purchased *jātri patti*, bought these prints. The continuing popularity of prints is evident at the contemporary bazaar in Puri (see chapter 1, p.72).

It seems that the setting up of the studio in Calcutta known as the "Calcutta Art Studio" (1878) and the subsequent printing of Hindu mytho-pictures had

42 Das refers to a couple of court cases but in general he does not convey his sources. At the office of the District and Sessions Judge, Puri (visited numerous times during 1991 and 1994) nobody was able to find the records Das refers to, this does not, however, mean they do not exist. I have not managed to trace any relevant government reports.

more significant consequences for the Bengal *patas*. According to Guha-Thakurta the new printing technology in the last decades of the 19th century presented Kalighat painters with the threat of extinction (Guha-Thakurta 1984:8)[43].

The first-known indigenous enterprise in lithography in Bengal was the Royal Lithographic Press set up around 1857 by former students of the School of Industrial Arts. About two decades after the founding of this press, another independent venture in commercial art, the Calcutta Art Studio, was set up by some ex-students of the Calcutta School of Art. "Hindu Mytho-pictures" were the most distinctive products of the Studio, and the most novel kind of Indian art on the popular market (Guha-Thakurta 1992:79). Contrary to its announcement of 1879, the Calcutta Art Studio began to work, not "for the convenience of the Gentry and the Nobility", but for the mass market that already existed for cheap prints and mythological pictures (ibid.:83). The "Hindu Mytho-pictures" marked a new trend of "realistic" Indian iconography that found its culmination in the oleographs of Ravi Varma[44].

Guha-Thakurta describes how, by the 1870s, the Kalighat picture painters (*patuas*) and the Bat-tala (an area of Calcutta) wood and metal-engravers were locked in close competition, the latter incorporating the popular images of Bengali *pata* painting and invading its market. However the Bat-tala engraver was himself soon challenged by the competition posed by lithography and oleography. The popular art market of Calcutta in the 1880s came to be flooded by hand-coloured lithographic pictures produced by the Calcutta Art Studio (ibid.:34).

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43 The Kalighat painters or *patuas* had come to Calcutta from rural Bengal to paint pilgrim souvenirs for the pilgrims visiting the Kalighat temple in the outskirts of Calcutta.

44 Ravi Varma's application of the Academic realistic conventions of European painting to themes from Hindu mythology was the main reason for his fame. For further information on Ravi Varma see Guha-Thakurta (1986, 1992) and Sharma & Chawla (1993).

According to Guha-Thakurta, many other small presses which were set up in the last decades of the 19th century all over the Black Town, around the same locality as the Bat-tala trade, to handle much the same demand for prints, illustrations, designs and religious pictures (ibid.:83). If not the Calcutta Art Studio, it might have been one of these studios which reproduced the *Jagannātha thiā badhiā* at the beginning of the 20th century when they had acquired the necessary technology to produce coloured chromolithographs (see chapter 3, figures 21a,21b).

The Decline Reconsidered

Did the prints then cause a decline and, if they did, to what extent? Das describes how the *Chitrakāras* of Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi had to look for other employment and states that "except for ritual work on doors and walls on a few days of the year, painting was forgotten by the *Chitrakāras*, and the brushes and colours were put away" (ibid.:84). According to Das it was to take more than a generation before *patta* painting was revived (Das 1982:84). Mohanty also mentions the demise of the craft, citing the introduction of prints as one of the main reasons (Mohanty 1980:8).

There are two points here which need to be considered. First of all, the decline in demand of *jātri pattis* is likely to have affected the painters of Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi more than the ones from Puri. In Puri, painters lived in close proximity to the *Jagannātha* temple and thus had easy access to pilgrims. The production of *jātri pattis* does not seem to have come to a halt in Puri.

According to Mildred Archer, paintings on both cloth and paper were still in active production in the town of Puri in the nineteen-thirties (1979:111). In the report mentioned earlier, Halina Zealey noted her impression of the production and sale:

> "Although the family[45] has good sales of Jugganath [sic] paintings during the great Car Festival in June, they are far from being well-off. They have difficulties in selling pictures in other parts of the year and remain largely unemployed" (Zealey 1953:2).

Zealey's note suggests that it is plausible that the production of *jātri pattis* in Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi was affected badly when cheap prints became available in Puri bazaar[46]. Archer's observation, however, indicates that there has been a sufficient demand for *jātri pattis* to keep several painters in Puri employed. In other words the production of *jātri patti* declined but did not come to an end as suggested by Das.

A failure to clarify exactly which paintings they describe, and for which locality, has caused Das and Mohānty to see the decline as a general phenomenon. In the case of Das this may well have been (unconsciously) reinforced by the author's wish to write a poignant story[47]. By stating that painting was forgotten, the basis is laid for a fascinating account of how a foreigner came to save an Indian traditional craft[48].

There was however one kind of production which came to an end, even if at a later stage, and that was the paintings made for Orissa's many Kings and lesser royalty. Neither the King of Puri, nor the queen of Dharakote or the prince of Chikiti have employed *Chitrakāras* to make *pattas* or decorate the walls of their palaces since Independence[49]. Before Independence it

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45 She does not mention which household she is referring to but it is likely to have been that of the three brothers Panu (E.1.), Rama (E.2.) and Raghu (E.3.) Mahāranā with whom she was familiar. As we have seen she mentions all of them in the notes which accompanied the objects she offered for sale to the Museum of Mankind, September 1976 (Ethnographic Document 1664).

46 Although it might not have ever been very high.

47 Jagannātha Prasad Das is a well-known poet and playwright.

48 Other scholars have accepted this interpretation. Williams writes: "In the 1950s the moribund production of painting was revived, stimulated by the interest of a Polish woman, Halina Zealey..." (1988:11).

49 Personal communication from the queen of Dharakote and the prince of Chikiti, Orissa 1992.

was not uncommon for a king or wealthy person to order very big *patta* paintings. An example of such a *patta*, measuring 78" x 156", can be found in the national museum of Copenhagen[50]. Such an order would employ several painters at a time and is likely to have been highly rewarding when compared to the income from *jātri pattis*[51].

When Zealey first came to Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi she encouraged painters, who only occasionally painted *jātri pattis* on newspaper, to begin painting *pattas*[52]. The Orissan government also likewise stimulated the making of *patta* paintings rather than *jātri pattis*. The painters were, in other words, encouraged to paint for a different and more wealthy clientele, namely Indian and foreign tourists.

This production for tourists can be seen as a revival of the type of paintings which earlier had been made for Kings, royalty and wealthy persons. It might be objected that it is not reasonable here to talk about revival, because the change in clientele from Kings, royalty and wealthy people to tourists happened within a decade interrupted only by a short span of time. The importance however, is not to be found in the time span between decline and regeneration. The key is that a large new market was found for a type of painting for which there had never been great demand. This new

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50 In 1856 Benjamin Wolff gave the painting to the museum. A Norwegian by the name Mansback had given it to Wolff. Mansback had been employed by the British government to collect the duty of the pilgrims visiting the *Jagannātha* temple (Sjørslev and Speroni 1985:61).

51 As described in chapter 4 it was customary for Kings to provide the *Chitrakāra* with land (*jāgir*) as a payment for their services.

52 The priority of *pattas* over *jātri patti* is likely to have been a result of Zealey's wish to create a new and economically more rewarding market. People have probably always been quite happy to pay extra for finely detailed paintings made on double layered cloth, rather than newspaper.

market did not noticeably influence the production of *jātri pattis* which continued parallel to the production of *pattas* for tourists[53].

A "revival" thus took place - even if it was in a different sense from that described by Das. To some extent this process, initiated by Halina Zealey, was similar to the history of the Maori Rotorua wood carving described by Neich. According to him European expectations created a stress on the formal aspect of the art at the expense of semantic communication (1983:252).

However, in the case of *patta* painting it was not quite as simple. Whether they were made for pilgrims (*jātris*) or Kings, *patta* paintings had a communicative or informative role, either as traces of a ritually important centre, detailed illustrations of the *Jagannātha* temple and the surrounding area, or illustrations of the epics. When compared to the relatively finely executed *pattas* at the Indian Museum and Sir Asutosh Museum in Calcutta, the roughly executed *jātri pattis* suggest that for pilgrims what mattered was the informative iconic role rather than style: references to *Jagannātha* and the temple complex were more important than the actual execution. This interpretation is supported by two paragraphs in Zealey's report to AFSC:

> "They have difficulties in selling pictures in other parts of the year and remain largely unemployed. Their best work is too fine to be easily sold in Puri at normal times"...."fine hand painting takes time and costs more - not many pilgrims can afford it and buy cheap and crude hand paintings for a few annas, or the more modern and more hideous cheap coloured print for a few pice [sic]" (Zealey 1953:2).

It might, of course, be that the pilgrims, if they could afford it, would have preferred finely executed paintings. It could be argued that this was one of the reasons for the popularity of those prints which came to Puri from

53 It did, of course, have some influence. For example some male painters of Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi, who would otherwise have painted *jātri pattis* preferred to paint the more expensive *pattas*. Their wives however, continued to paint *jātri pattis* as described in chapter 1. Together with the *jātri patti* painters of Puri they have continued to fulfil the rather low demand for these paintings.

Calcutta. For the price of one roughly executed hand painted *jātri patti*, one could get several detailed and colourful prints[54]. There is no doubt, however, that the informative role was, and still is, of immense importance for paintings connected with the *Jagannātha* temple.

For Kings and other wealthy patrons, aesthetics was as important as the information conveyed in a painting and they could afford to be critical. Their preference for aesthetically pleasing, as well as informative, *pattas* are replicated today in many Indian tourists' choices. The foreign tourists, however, tend to stress the formal aspect of *pattas* at the expense of any semantic communication and the contemporary duality between Indian and western tourists is thus different from the earlier one between Kings and pilgrims[55].

However, even if religious significance in the actual moment of exchange (in the case of foreign and some Indian tourists) is stripped away, it is replaced by a meaning ascribed by the paintings' worth as "authentic" Indian objects. Elsewhere the paintings are endowed with a new kind of meaning by art specialists and the national elite. This is the subject of chapter 6.

Strangers and Revivals

It was the strangers, Halina and Philip Zealey, who drew official attention to the declining craft of Orissan *patta* paintings. In this respect they are but one example of outsiders who have been, if not entirely then at least in part responsible for artistic revival in India, as well as other parts of the world.

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54 For a discussion of the effect of lithography and oleography on the Kalighat picture painters and the Bat-tala wood and metal-engravers see pp. 117-118 and Guha-Thakurta (1992:34).

55 Of course this is not a straight forward duality. Not all Indian tourists possess the knowledge required to decipher the paintings and a few foreign tourists are knowledgeable.

W.G.Archer, the English civil servant, was for example the first to draw the attention of the art world to the mural paintings of Mithila (M. Archer 1979:5-6, Jayakar 1989:99).

This is by no means a feature only of India. In the town of Oshogbo in Nigeria a European artist, Suzanne Wenger, directed the preservation and reconstructing of the sacred Oshun grove of the town. According to Ulli Beier the conception and implementation required an outsider because the local Orisha worshippers were too demoralised and aware of their complete lack of political influence. Wenger apparently supplied the locals with a new vision and motivation (Beier 1975).

It is not my intention to suggest that Yoruba Orisha would have vanished had it not been for the initiative of Wenger. Her project has, of course, been carried out in collaboration with the local people. Hans Rhodius and John Darling have noted how certain scholars' interpretations, for example, of the role Walter Spies has played in Balinese art, have tended to ignore the initiative of local people. Many earlier accounts of the intervention of Spies have implied that he exercised a kind of artistic colonisation (Rhodius and Darling 1980:67).

When I mention the intervention of outsiders I do not imply that the role they have played in revivals is any more significant than that of local people. The Orissan government would almost certainly have decided to support the craft of *patta* painting independent of the initiative of Halina and Philip Zealey.

The Salvage Paradigm

In the late 1980s the intervention and involvement of outsiders - mainly Europeans and Americans aiming to ensure that unfamiliar cultural traits do not vanish - were the subject of a discussion entitled "Of Other Peoples:

Beyond the "salvage" Paradigm"[56]. One of the participants, James Clifford, describes the salvage paradigm as a geo-political, historical paradigm which has structured Western art- and culture-collecting[57]. According to Clifford the "desire to rescue 'authenticity' out of destructive historical change" is founded on a pervasive ideological complex (1987:121). He argues for the necessity of clearing away underlying conceptions of history and authenticity[58].

Clifford points out that our dominant temporal sense - which according to him is historical and assumed to be linear and non repeatable - is reflected in museums, archives and collections preserving and thus constructing an authentic past (ibid.:121-122). He describes two approaches to "the other" which have dominated anthropology, namely the evolutionist and the relativist approach. While the evolutionary model ordered the diversities of the world in a linear sequence; relativist anthropology reorganised different groups of people as separate, functioning cultures endowed with the ambiguous temporal status known as the "ethnographic present" (ibid:122). Clifford notes how the salvage paradigm has perceived non-western people as being marginal to the advancing world system. When these people encounter modernity local, distinctive paths vanish. Clifford convincingly demonstrates that authenticity in art or culture is recurrently thought to exist just prior to the present, rather than in a distant past. The latter would make salvage impossible (ibid.:122).

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56 The contributions were published in **Discussions in contemporary culture no.1.** ed. Hal Foster 1987.

57 Anthropologists have in the past (and still do) played a very important role in this practice. Clifford mentions A.L.Kroeber's recording of languages of "disappearing" California Indians and Bronislaw Malinowski's suggestion that a vanishing authentic Trobriand Island culture was preserved only in his texts, as examples of what he calls the "salvage ethnography" of Franz Boas's generation (1987:121).

58 For a discussion of the political problems involved in the process of Westerners aiming to salvage the objects and cultures or others see Virginia R. Dominguez (1987) and Trinh T. Minh-ha (1987).

Recently anthropologists have paid attention to the local production of histories, dismissing the assumption that non western peoples do not have a historical consciousness. The importance of this has, according to Clifford, been to "reconceive 'cultures' as arenas, not merely of structural order and symbolic pattern, but also of conflict, disorder and emergence" (ibid.:125).

In recent discourses of non-western and feminist writers "authenticity" has been re-conceived as hybrid, creative activity in a local present-becoming the future rather than being centred on a salvaged past. This opens up new possibilities: Clifford cites the case of a museum in Vancouver involved with native communities, in which native artists make new works for the ethnographic museum and take old objects out to be used in potlatches (ibid.:150)[59].

Clifford refers to Coe's "Lost and Found Traditions" (1986) as an example of a work in which the **production** rater than the salvage of authenticity is recorded. Among other examples of tribal work, Coe has collected "skilfully beaded tennis shoes and baseball caps" (Clifford 1987:128). New "traditional" works are commissioned by the author, artists are heard and the coexistence of spiritual, aesthetic and commercial forces is made visible (ibid.:129).

The Zealeys' involvement with and wish to save "authentic" crafts from destructive historical change is a typical product of the "salvage paradigm"[60]. Their use of museum pieces as ideals for the contemporary production places the couple in a tradition established by the Orientalists of the early 20th century and, as we shall see in chapter 6, antecedent to some of the contemporary art specialists in Orissa.

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59 Clifford does not mention the name of the museum.

60 See for example her note on Orissan stone carvers quoted on page 93 in this chapter.

Conclusion

Halina Zealey's concern with authenticity raises a question concerning the kind of production she, according to Das, encouraged (1982:86). An article by Philip Zealey confirms that craftsmen were encouraged to paint "decorative wall plaques, painted tea trays, book ends and even painted pottery of various kinds" (P.Zealey 1954:795), but is it plausible that this was a result of an incentive offered by the Zealeys? Did they conceive of these products as authentic Orissan crafts? It is unlikely.

We need only to recall Halina Zealey's comment on the robes of a Nāgā chief to be convinced that this is not likely to have been the case. As mentioned earlier the Nāgā chief, according to Zealey, confirmed the "total authenticity of the robes by wanting....to show..how he wears them" (see p. 110). Apparently it was the fact that the robes were originally intended for functional use in a "traditional" manner that convinced Zealey of the authenticity of the robes.

Steiner has recently shown how African art will be considered authentic by Western dealers and art historians only if made by an African artist for "his" people with a ritual or functional purpose (1994:100-101). Some years earlier, in a discussion on authenticity and Oriental carpets, Brian Spooner had drawn a related conclusion, stating that to the Western consumer, "The real thing is not simply an artifact; it is made by particular individuals, from special handcrafted materials, in particular social, cultural, and environmental conditions, with motifs and designs learned from earlier generations" (1988:199).

Halina Zealey's attitude to authenticity suggests that it probably was not she who initially recommended the making of utilitarian utensils, but the institutions of the Orissan government. I have no evidence of the kind of

productions encouraged by the government institutions in the early 1950s but, as we shall see in chapter 6, it is clear that the utilitarian ideology continues in the policy of the contemporary Orissan Directorate of Handicraft and Cottage Industries[61].

I would suggest that the role the Zealeys played in the revival, of the kind of paintings which earlier had been made for Kings, royalty and wealthy persons, is likely to have been exaggerated by the painters as well as by Das who based his version of history on the accounts of the painters (1982). The Zealeys made their entry on the scene at a point in time when the National Government had decided to support handicraft productions all over the country and just before the Handicraft institutions of the Orissan Government had begun to function. Handicraft production had potential not only as an employment generating industry, but was part of a much wider "Indian" handicraft ideology stressing the closeness of contemporary productions with unbroken tradition. The writings of the Zealeys indicate just how pervasive and strong the Indian handicraft ideology was at the time of their stay.

In contrast to civil servants, Halina Zealey must have stood out due to her (initially) independent involvement with the craftsmen and their products. It is therefore not surprising that it was Zealey rather than the state government who has gone into history as the safeguarder of the Orissan *patta* tradition[62].

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61 The Orissan government's involvement with the revival of handicrafts in the years following Independence remains a project for the future.

62 Das records: "...the fact that Halina Zealey had achieved the impossible. She had brought back a whole community of Chitrakāras to a profession which was traditionally their own but which they had abandoned under compelling circumstances. She had achieved this single-handed, with a meagre grant of Rs. 3.500, her halting Oriya and an infinite love for the Puri paintings and their makers" (1982:89).

We have heard about the painters who make the *patta* paintings as well as the people and institutions which have been involved in the process of revival. I will now look closely at the paintings themselves.

Chapter 3
Selected Examples of
Orissan *Patta* Paintings

This chapter is a catalogue of Orissan *patta* paintings that aims to convey an idea of *pattas* as a genre. I refer to the catalogue several times in the thesis and have therefore found a simple descriptive form most suitable. The characteristic features of each of the paintings presented will be discussed. When paintings contain several illustrations an account of the story (*kahani*) will be given.

The first section of the chapter concentrates on paintings which, with one exception, are preserved in museum archives. A couple of paintings pre-date the 20th century but the majority are from the 1920s, 1930s, 1950s, and 1970s. The paintings have been presented according to, firstly, chronology and, secondly, themes, as far as that is possible. Unfortunately there are gaps in the pictorial record and it has not been possible to establish what developments were happening in the field in terms of style and choice of motifs during certain periods in this century.

The second section of the chapter concentrates on contemporary images collected during my fieldwork. Rather than searching for rare examples, I have chosen to present paintings which give an overview of the kind of paintings which were most commonly produced during my stay in the district of Puri. The quality of the specific paintings will, in general, not be discussed[1]. Most of the paintings presented can be classified as "everyday market work" (*chālu kāma*)[2]. There are, however, a few examples of paintings which painters generally considered of high quality. In accordance with the artists' wishes I have only mentioned their names in some cases. Few painters want their name under a hurriedly executed painting.

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[1] See chapter 5 for a discussion of evaluations and judgements of *pattas*.

[2] See chapter 5 for a discussion of local aesthetic notions.

Where relevant, illustrations of parallel plastic stickers, temple murals, stone carvings, oleographs, wood cut, metal plate, and calendar prints are presented. *Patta* paintings are defined and read against these visual fields by producers as well as consumers whose expectations are to some extent structured by them.

The third section of the chapter is concerned with *patā* paintings made for ritual purposes. In contrast to the majority of *patta* paintings *patās* always depict a deity in a frontal position to allow the auspicious sight (*darsana*) of a deity.

The earliest published reference to *patta* paintings appeared in a book by Rajendralala Mitra, who briefly described the production near the *Jagannātha* temple, and the sale to pilgrims (1880, quoted in M. Archer 1979:110). Six years later, T.N. Mukharji stated that compared to the "inferior paintings" of Kalighat, Calcutta, "higher skill is shown in the pictures of Jagannath sold at Puri" (1886:1, quoted in M. Archer 1979:110). He added that "These are strictly Indian and the industry is very old", a statement which indicates that purity of style was important to Mukharji. This might have been the reason for his negative judgement of the Kalighat paintings which displayed an obvious British influence (in medium as well as some of the themes depicted [see W.G. Archer 1971:4-5]).

M. Archer describes the *patta* paintings as closer in style to the Bengal scroll paintings than the Kalighat paintings although "they had the same qualities of masterly simplification as well as another quality - a strong bias towards vital geometry" (1979:5). She also mentions the colours in the earliest of the *pattas* collected by W.G. Archer: "rich Indian reds, dull blues, soft greens and rich yellow" (1979:111).

In the early part of this century the *patta* paintings depicted the *Jagannātha* triad either on its own or in the *Jagannātha* temple (the so called *thiā badhiā* paintings), or single illustrations of the epics of *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata* (particularly the *Krishnaleelā* section), or some of the

purānas. The paintings depicting the *Jagannātha* triad, including those made for pilgrims (*jātri pattis*), have changed surprisingly little during the 20th century. They present a remarkably static form that has been very popular at least throughout the last three centuries[3].

The current *pattas* illustrate a broader range of themes and rather than depicting a single image several paintings develop a linear narrative form. The fundamental stylistic change in the paintings was introduced in the early 1960s and was the result of a new chronologically ordered *patta* design developed in the Handicraft Complex in Bhubaneshwar. The purpose of this new design was to make it possible for people to immediately understand and follow the theme and story of a painting[4].

Section I

Examples of Early *Patta* Paintings

Figure 11: The *Jagannātha* triad in the *Jagannātha* temple. By courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum, accession number: IM 64 - 1985.

Artist/s: Unknown, Puri, 17th century.

Motif: The *Jagannātha* triad in the *Jagannātha* temple. The panel at the bottom on the right depicts the Nepali king Jagatprakasamalla of Bhaktapur, 1643-72 and some of his relatives. According to Starza-Majewski the painting was commissioned by the Nepali king and "associated with the performance of rites and the hoisting of the flag for the donor" (1993b:54). For a detailed discussion of the painting see Starza-Majewski (1993a:35-43).

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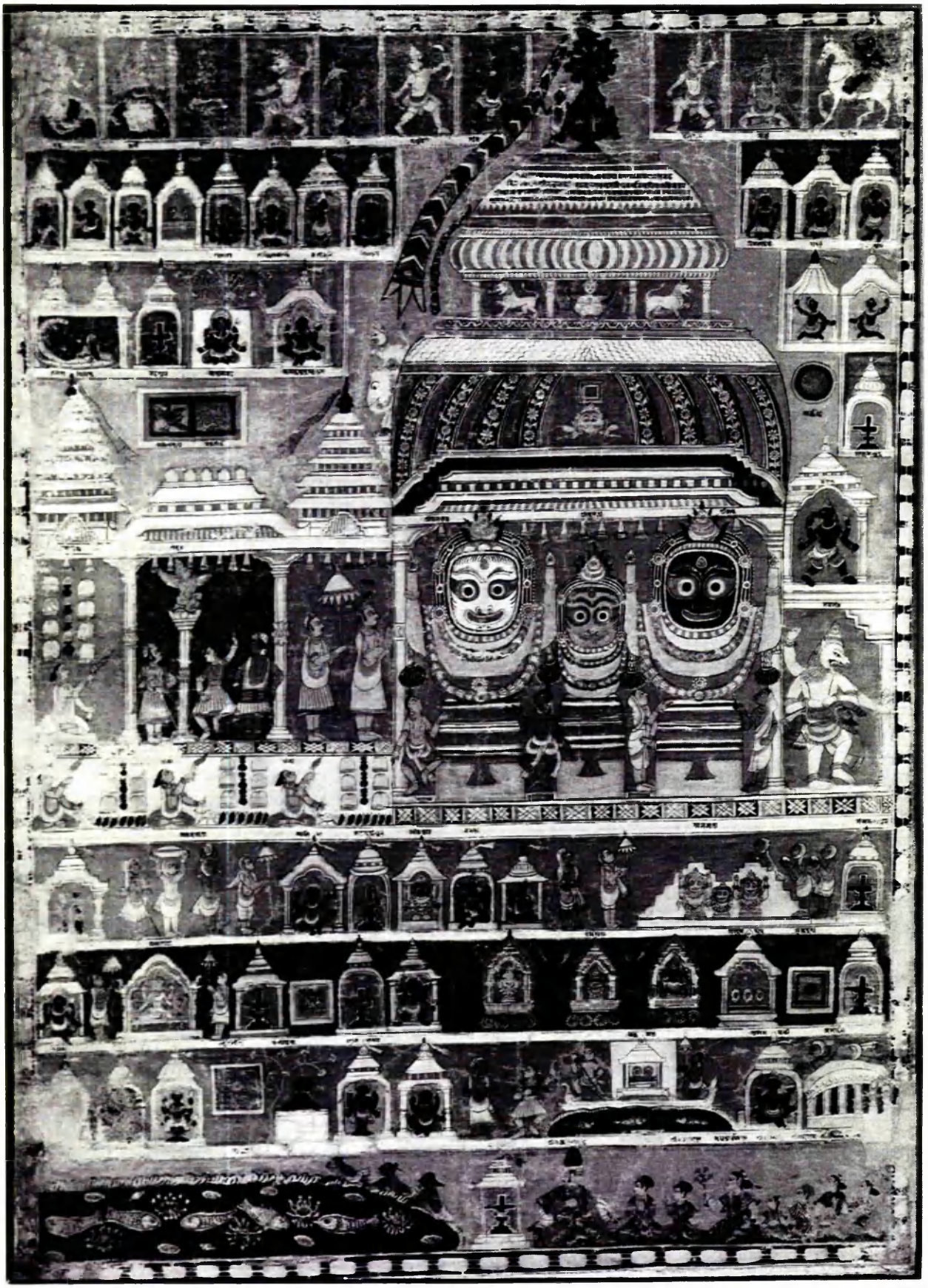
[3] Recently O.M. Starza-Majewski described a *patta* painting, painted in Puri in 1670, depicting the *Jagannātha* triad in the *Jagannātha* temple complex (see figure 11) (Starza-Majewski 1993a:35-43). This painting is very similar to contemporary *thiā badhiā* paintings made for tourists (see figure 29).

[4] Graburn mentions art objects' ability to be understood as one of the characteristics necessary for trade objects produced for the mass market (1976:15).

Figure 11: The *Jagannātha* triad in the *Jagannātha* temple



Material and size (height x breadth)[5]: Canvas (*patti*), approximately 45" x 33".

Colours: Black (*kalā*), white (*sankha*), red (*hingula*), yellow and red overlapping[6], and reddish brown (*geru*). The Oriya terms for white and red denote colours used earlier in this century[7].

Border: Does not have a specific name.

Decoration of background: Plain.

Figure 12: The *Jagannātha* temple. By courtesy of the British Museum, accession number: OA 1880-304.

Artist/s: Unknown, Puri, 19th or 20th century.

Motif: The *Jagannātha* triad in the *Jagannātha* temple in Puri town, symbolically depicted as a conch-shell (*sankha khsyetra*). According to Starza-Majewski, Puri is imagined as a conch-shell in the *purānas* (1989:257).

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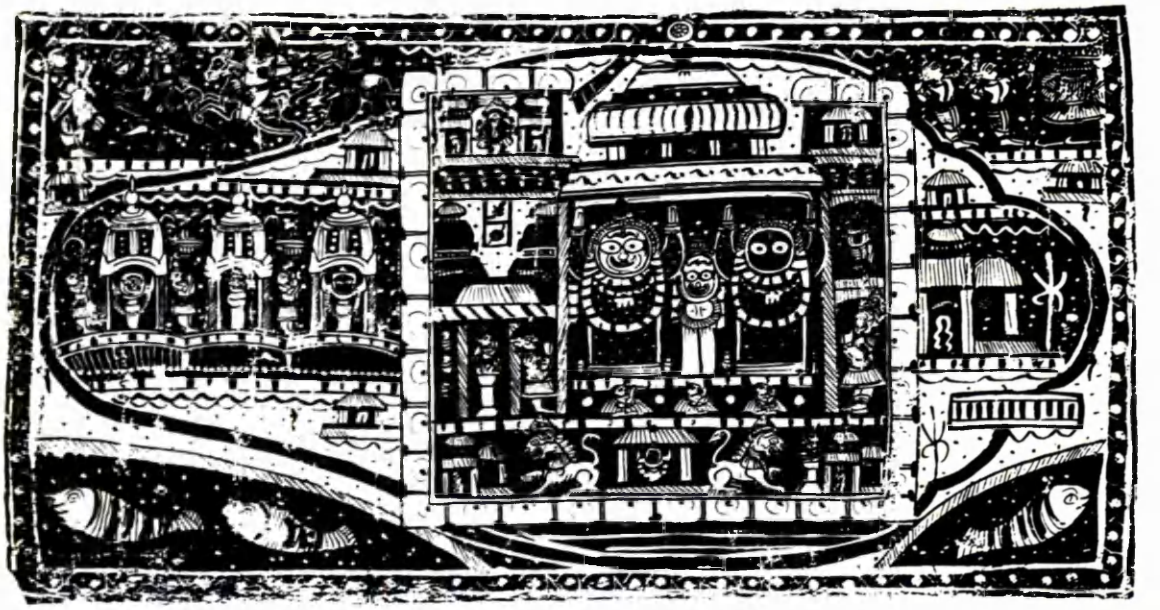
[5] I have followed the measurements most commonly used amongst the painters of Puri district and the size is therefore stated to the nearest inch.

[6] *Patta* painters classified orange as either red or yellow depending on the shade of colour.

[7] *Sankha* (white) was made from grinding conch-shells into powder, *haritāla* (yellow) was acquired from orpiment, *geru* (colloquially *dhāu*) (red ochre) was/is made from ochre, whereas *hingula* (bright red) was/is produced from grinding cinnabar. *Kalā* (black) was obtained from the soot of an oil lamp and *nila* (blue) purchased in tablet form. *Pachā* (green) was obtained by mixing *nila* and *haritāla*. It is not possible to determine to what extent these colours were actually used. Were they, perhaps, mainly used when executing fine and expensive orders, some of which have ended up in museums? In any case it is certain that ready made powdered colours were also popular in the last century. According to Das, Nilambara Vidyadhar mentions an eighteenth century work describing bazaar colours such as *sindura* (red lead), *rasa sindura* (sulfide of mercury), and *mairigiriā* (blue vitriol) among others available in the market in Orissa (Das 1982:94).

Figure 12: The *Jagannātha* temple



Material and size: *Patti*, 22" x 12".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow (*haritāla*), green (*pachā* [colloquial term]), and blue. The Oriya term for yellow denotes a colour used earlier in this century.

Border: Circles (*golei*).

Decoration of background: Dots (*topi*).

Figure 13: *Rāma Abhiseka* (*Rāma's* consecration). By courtesy of the Indian Museum, Calcutta, accession number: AT/90/1293.

Artist/s: Unknown, Puri district, approximately 1920s.

Figure 13: ***Rāma Abhiseka***

Motif: *Rāma* and *Sītā* sit on a jewel throne (*singhāsana*) while *Hanumān*, in a gesture of affection, holds *Rāma's* foot. On *Rāma's* right stands the bear *Jāmbaban* and further away the younger brother of *Rābana*, the demon (*rākshyasa*) *Bibhishana*[8]. On *Sītā's* left stand two of *Rāma's* brothers: *Lakshmana* holding an umbrella (*chhati*) and *Bharata* waving a whisk (*chanara*)[9].

Material and size: *Patti* glued on cardboard, 15" x 20".

Colours: Black, white, dark red, light red, yellow, light blue, green, and reddish brown.

Borders:

a) bent fly (*banka māchhi*),

b) wavy (*lahara*).

Decoration of background: Designs of seven petals (*sata anguliā punji*, two fairies (*parīs*), and a drape (*chānduā*).

Figure 14: ***Rāma Abhiseka*** (*Rāma's* consecration). By courtesy of the Indian Museum, Calcutta, accession number: AT/90/1294.

Artist/s: Unknown, Puri district, approximately 1920s.

Motif: The theme is the same as the one described above but a few more figures have been included. On the left the *rākshyasa Bibhishana* holds a silk sari (*pāta sādhi*). He is followed by the bear *Jāmbaban* and the sage *Bishvāmitra*. *Sītā* is seated with *Rāma* and on her left stand *Lakshmana* (holding a ritual umbrella [*chhati*]), Bharata (holding a whisk [*chanara*]), and *Shatrughna* (holding a fan [*binchanā*]).

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[8] Throughout this chapter "on X's right or left" denotes a persons' proper right or left.

[9] For a short but relatively detailed account of the coronation of *Rāma* see *Rāmāyana* by Subramaniam (1990:560-61).

Figure 14: ***Rāma Abhiseka***

Material and size: *Patti* glued on cardboard, approximately 30" x 18".

Colours: Black, white, dark and light red, dark and light yellow, blue, dark and light green, grey (*pāhādiā* [colloquial term]), and reddish brown.

Borders:

a) curved fly (*banka māchhi*),

b) dots (*topi*),

c) wavy (*lahara*).

Decoration of background: Two pillars support the arch which has been decorated with flowers (*phula*) and leaves (*patra*). The floor is made with a square pattern decorated with clusters of dots (*punji*[10]), similar to the chequered floors in some of the contemporary paintings (see figures 41 and 48). The background has been decorated with groups of five dots (*pāncha topi*).

Figure 15: ***Akrura Ratha/Mathurā Bijaya*** (*Akrura's* chariot). By courtesy of the Indian Museum, Calcutta, accession number: AT/90/1395.

Artist/s: Unknown, Puri district, approximately 1920s.

Motif: *Kansā* has sent his charioteer *Akrura* to bring *Krishna* and *Balarām* to *Kansa's* kingdom Mathurā. The painting depicts *Akrura* driving the chariot in which *Balarām* and *Krishna* are seated while *gopis*, without success, try to hinder the departure, unable to bear the thought of separation from their lord *Krishna*[11].

Material and size: *Patti* glued on cardboard, 9.5" x 12".

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[10] *Punji* denotes five dots corresponding to the four fingers and the thumb.

[11] For a detailed account of *Krishna's* visit to *Kansā's* palace, see Shastri (1988:1491-1495).

Figure 15: ***Akrura Ratha/Mathurā Bijaya***

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, light blue, and green.

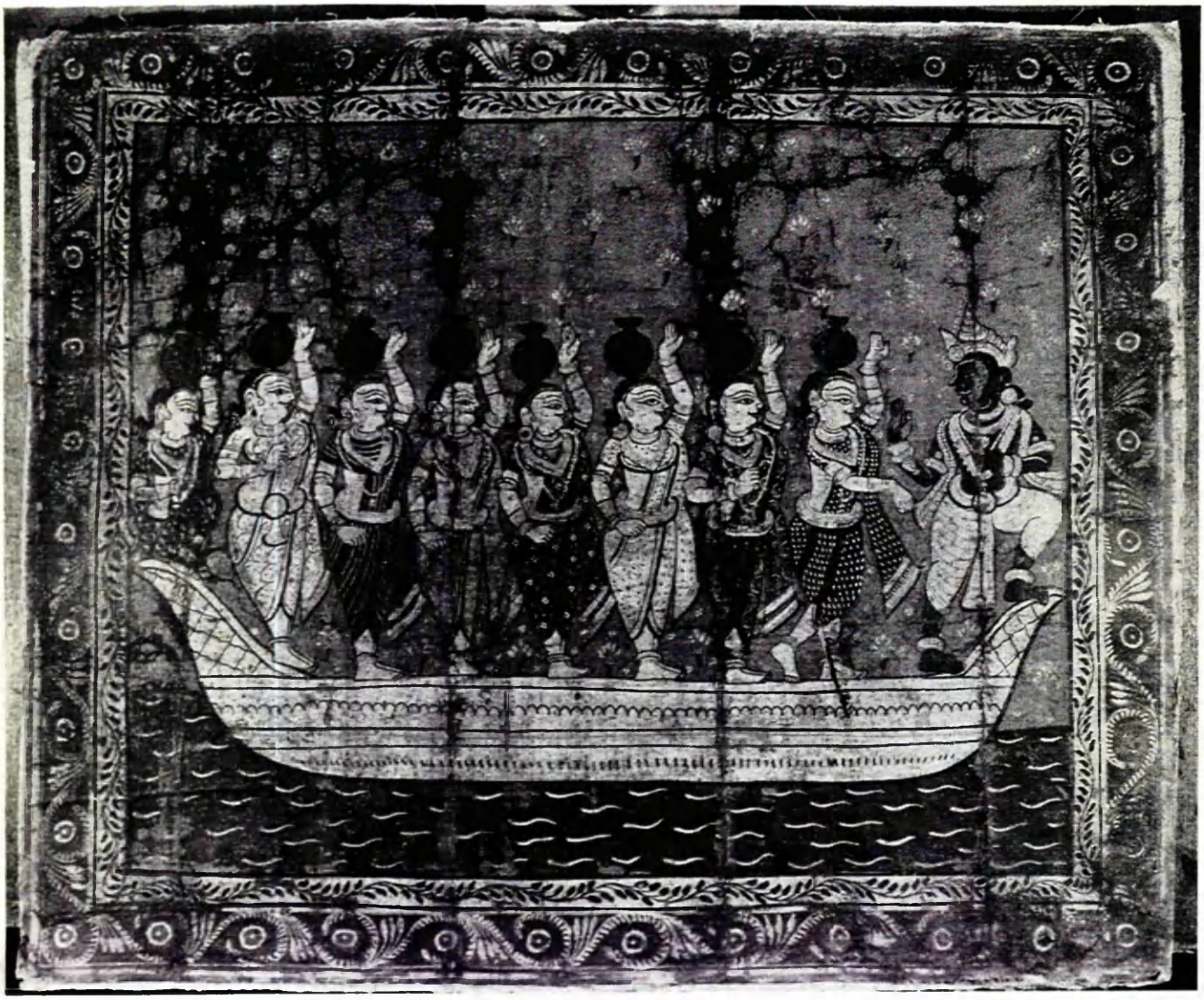
Borders:

a) curved fly (*banka māchhi*),

b) wavy (*lahara*).

Decoration of background: *Kadamba* trees[12] and clusters of dots (*punji*).

Figure 16: ***Nābakeli*** (playing boat). By courtesy of the Indian Museum, Calcutta, accession number: At/90/1397.



[12] *Kadamba* trees (nauclea cadamba) are drawn in *Krishnaleelā* paintings.

Artist/s: Unknown, Puri district, approximately 1920s.

Motif: *Krishna* is boating with eight *gopis*, a favoured activity in the intense summer heat. The *gopis* all wear saris with distinct designs and their fingers and feet are executed with attention to detail.

Material and size: *Patti* glued on cardboard, 20" x 17".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, blue, and green.

Borders:
a) round stem (*demphi golei*),
b) wavy (*lahara*).

Decoration of background: Designs of five petals (*pāncha anguliā topi*) and clusters of dots (*punji*).

Figure 17: ***Kāliyadalana*** (subduing the snake *Kāliya*). By courtesy of The Indian Museum, Calcutta, accession number: AT/90/1396.

Artist/s: Unknown, Puri district, approximately 1920s.

Motif: *Krishna* subdues the serpent *Kāliya*. Serpent deities (*nāga kanyā*) offer papayas (*amruta bhandā*) and submit themselves to *Krishna*[13]. In contrast to figure 34, obvious inspiration from popular prints such as halos has not been introduced in this version of *Kāliyadalana*.

Material and size: *Patti* glued on cardboard, 18" x 18".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, blue, and green.

[13] This narration has its roots in the *Bhāgavata purāna*. See Shastri (1988:1358-1369).

Figure 17: ***Kāliyadalana***

Borders:

a) round stem (*demphi golei*),

b) wavy (*lahara*),

c) Little triangles (*kumbhas*).

Decoration of background: *Kadamba* trees and designs of five petals (*pāncha angulià punji*).

Figure 18: ***Bastra Harana*** (stealing of clothes). By courtesy of the Indian Museum, Calcutta, accession number: AT/90/1398.

Artist/s: Unknown, Puri district. According to Dr. D. Mitra Datta, Art keeper, the early Orissan *pattas* in the museum collection are approximately from the 1920s but they might be of a more recent date.

Motif: This motif, still very popular, depicts *Krishna* who has stolen the clothes of the *gopis* and enjoys the sight of the naked women from the top of a kadamba tree. When talking about the illustration painters often related how *Krishna* promised to return the clothes to the *gopis* on the condition that they raised their folded palms to their heads, i.e. greet him uncovered, a demand to which they submitted[14].

Material and size: *Patti* glued on cardboard, 17" x 20".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, blue, and green.

Borders:

a) round stem (*demphi golei*),

b) wavy (*lahara*).

Decoration of background: groups of five dots (*panchā topi*) and designs of five petals (*panchā angulià punji*).

[14] The narration has roots in *Bhāgavata purāna*, see Shastri (1988:1396-1399).

Figure 18: ***Bastra Harana***

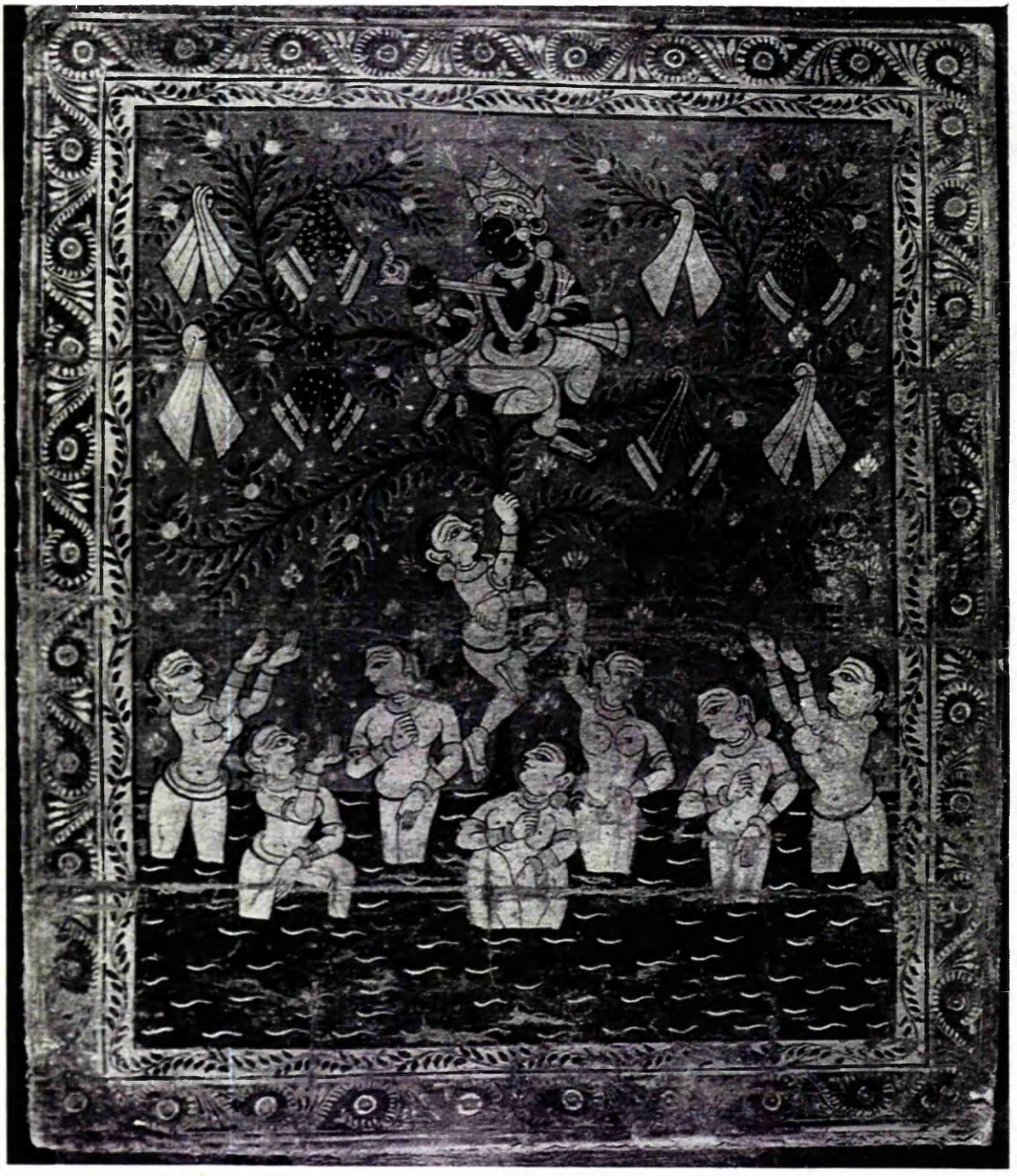


Figure 19: *Bastra Harana* (stealing of clothes). By courtesy of Prints and Drawings, India Office Library, accession number: Add or 3668. Acquired by W.G.Archer in a suburb of Puri 1933. Mildred Archer suggests that the painting is from the 18th century or earlier (1977:119), tough I believe this to be unlikely[15].

Motif: *Krishna*, here depicted in the form of *Jagannātha*, has hung the clothes of the *gopis* on the branches of a tree. His female companions stand naked in the water reaching for their clothes.

[15] According to Mildred Archer, her husband W.G. Archer purchased the paintings in shops near the *Jagannātha* temple or directly from the painters (1979:5). It is likely that painters and dealers then, as now, have described the paintings as "old" in an attempt to convince a western customer to purchase a painting. However, considering the climate and insects which eat paint and cloth it is not likely that the paintings were actually "old". Moreover most painter households probably would not have been able to afford to keep a completed painting.

This *patta* is distinct from figure 18 in which the *gopis* have been painted with an emphasis on detail and the execution of *Krishna*'s clothes and ornaments is minute, particularly when compared to *Jagannātha*'s appearance in figure 19.

While figure 19 is characterised by its geometrically stylised form, figure 18 is more naturalistic. The geometrical symmetry of the tree is absent and the figures are more voluptuous, possibly directly influenced by the 19th century woodcut from Calcutta or the Ravi Varma print illustrating the same theme (see figures 19a and 19b)[16].

If M. Archer's and Dr. D. Mitra Datta's estimations of the date of production is correct, this would account for the change in style. Another important element to take into consideration, however, is the different customers for which the paintings were intended. The *Jagannātha* painting (figure 19) is likely to have been produced for sale to pilgrims who generally would not have been prepared to spend a lot of money on a painting. In contrast the *Krishna* painting (figure 18) was probably produced with wealthy Bengalis or royalty in mind - people who could afford to pay for detailed and carefully executed paintings.

Material and size: Paper, approximately 8" x 10".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, green, blue, and reddish brown.

Borders:

a) chequered (*jāli*),

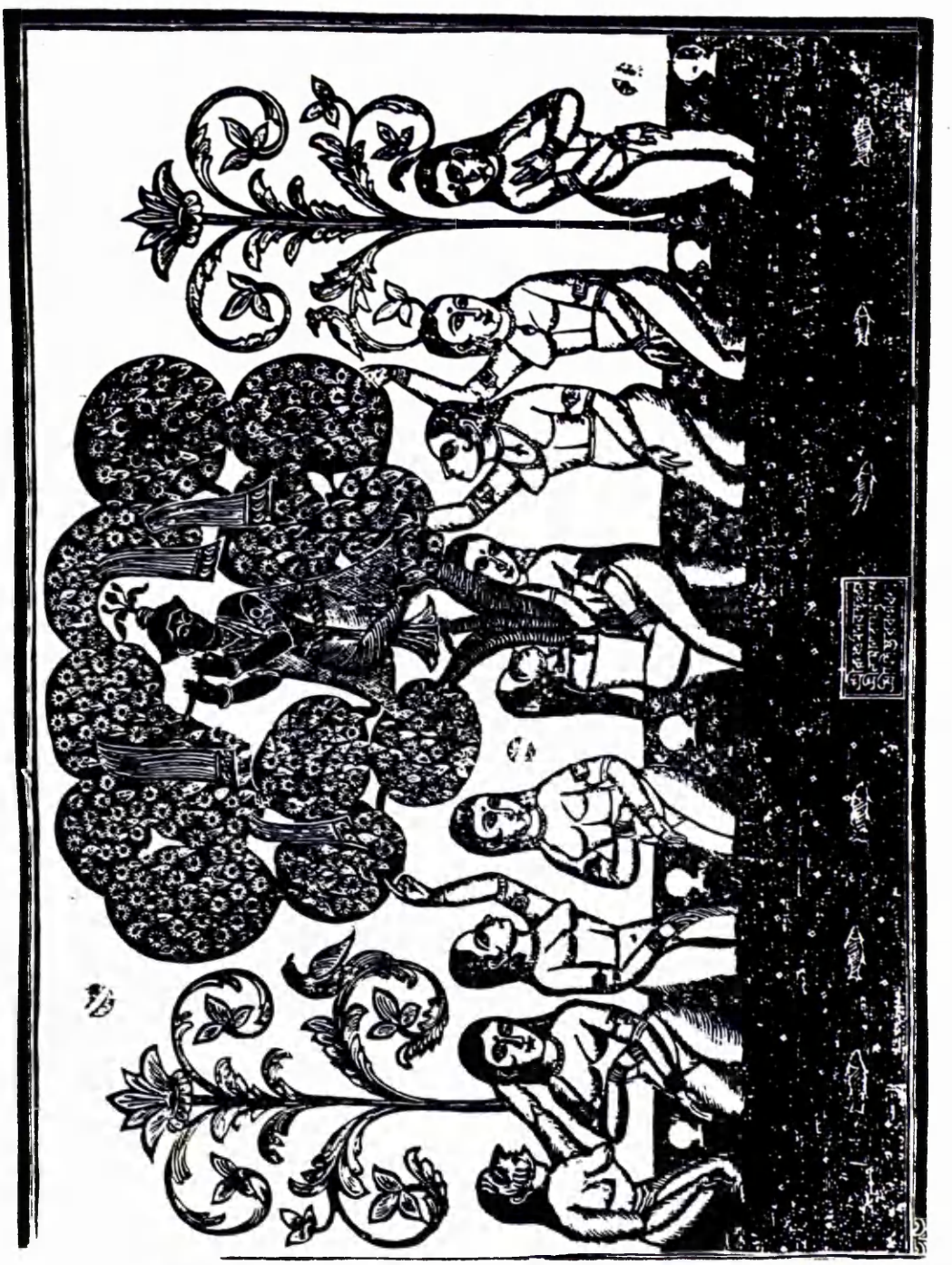
b) clusters of dots (*punji*).

Decoration of background: Four marks of white (*sankhapatā*) called "hanging things" (*jharā*).

[16] The Oriya conventions of bulbous rounded bodies (Starza-Majewski 1993b:52) in painting and the erotic temple carvings (Konarak) have probably meant that a gradual adoption of a more voluptuous style in painting could pass almost unnoticed.

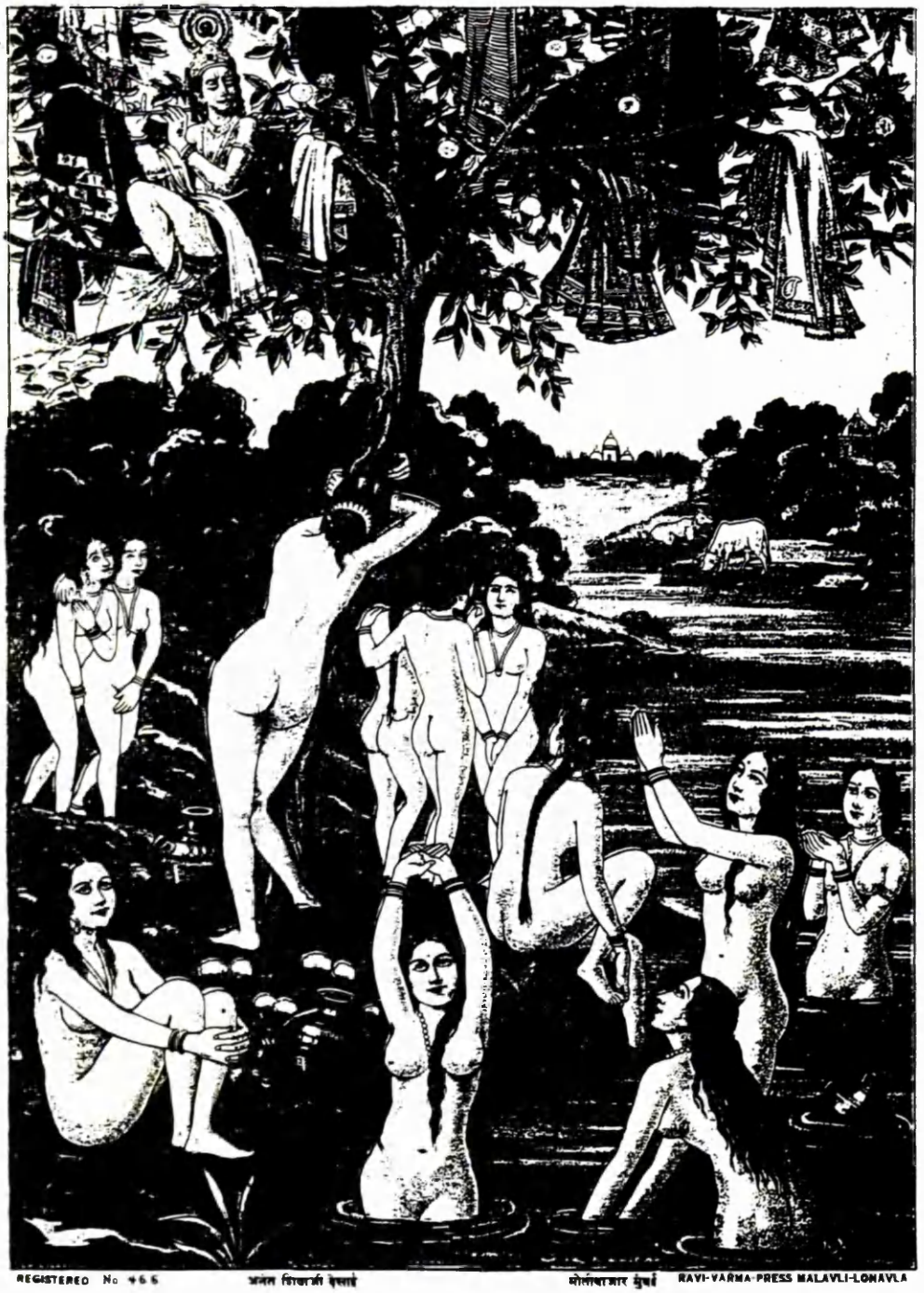
Figure 19a: ***Bastra Harana*** (stealing of clothes), black and white woodcut, (13.25" x 9.25"), reproduced in Paul, plate 35 (1983:52).

This woodcut from 19th century Calcutta, which made mass-production possible, indicates that the motif *Bastra harana* was popular also in the 19th century. It is very likely that the Puri painters in the late 19th century and early 20th century were influenced first by woodcut prints and later chromolithographs from Calcutta.



Although images produced in Calcutta, due to the city's proximity to Puri, doubtless have been the most important source of influence for the Puri painters it is possible that other images such as those of Ravi Varma have played a role too.

Figure 19b: ***Bastra Harana*** (stealing of clothes), chromolithograph by Ravi Varma, approximately 1910-20.



The first Ravi Varma lithographs were printed by the Ravi Varma Press, set up at Girgaum in 1892 (Guha-Thakurta 1986:187). According to Guha-Thakurta it was the "distorted" nature of garish popular engravings of Hindu deities which persuaded Ravi Varma to mass-produce his own "realistic" mythological paintings (1986:186-187)[18]. These paintings, which illustrated themes from Hindu mythology, followed the Academic realistic conventions of European painting. It is probable that the western influence apparent in the *pattas* from the early 20th century have partly been inspired by Ravi Varma's images which attained a huge popularity at the beginning of the century.

Figure 20: ***Kānchi Bijaya*** (victory over the kingdom of Kanchi). By courtesy of Prints of Drawings, India Office Library, accession number: Add or 3663.

Acquired by W.G. Archer 1933 in a suburb of Puri. As in the case of figure 19 Mildred Archer suggests it is from the 18th century or earlier (ibid.:117). However, this is unlikely.

Motif: This illustration of a local legend is very popular in Orissa. The milkmaid *Mānika* offers *Balabhadra* and *Jagannātha* curd. The figures are all stylised, the only naturalistic element being the feet and hands of the brothers. For a version of the local legend see comments upon figure 35.

Material and size: Paper, approximately 9" x 11".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, reddish brown, blue, and green.

Borders: Flowers (*phula*).

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18 For a discussion of Ravi Varma and the westernisation of South Indian painting in the 19th century see Guha-Thakurta (1986).

Decoration of background: Decoration with white (*sankhapatā*) and clusters of dots (*punji*).

Figure 20: ***Kānchi Bijaya***

Figure 21: ***Balabhadra, Subhadrā and Jagannātha***. By courtesy of Prints and Drawings, India Office Library, accession number: Add or 3695.

Acquired by W.G. Archer 1933. Mildred Archer makes the improbable suggestion that the painting is from the late 19th century (ibid.:125).

Motif: The *Jagannātha* trio and the *Sudarshana Chakra* in the form of a white lingam. *Jagannātha* and *Balabhadra* wear white flower garlands, a "dress" (*besa*) called *badasinghāra*. This is a typical example of a *jātri patti*. At the turn of the century illustrations of *Balabhadra, Subhadrā*, and

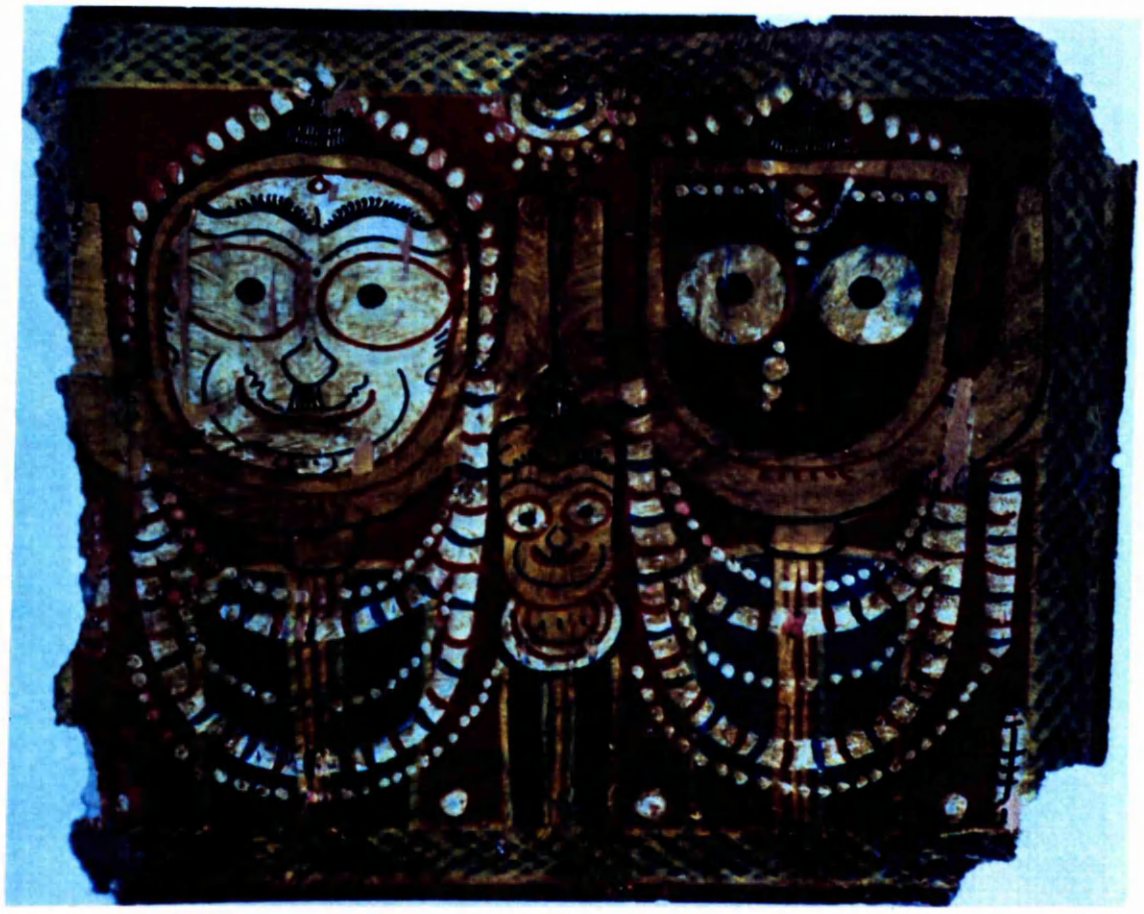
Jagannātha were available in the form of mass produced wood cut prints and chromolithographs made by the Calcutta Studio and the Ravi Varma Press (see figures 21a and 21b).

Material and size: Newspaper, approximately 10" x 11".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, blue, green, and reddish brown.

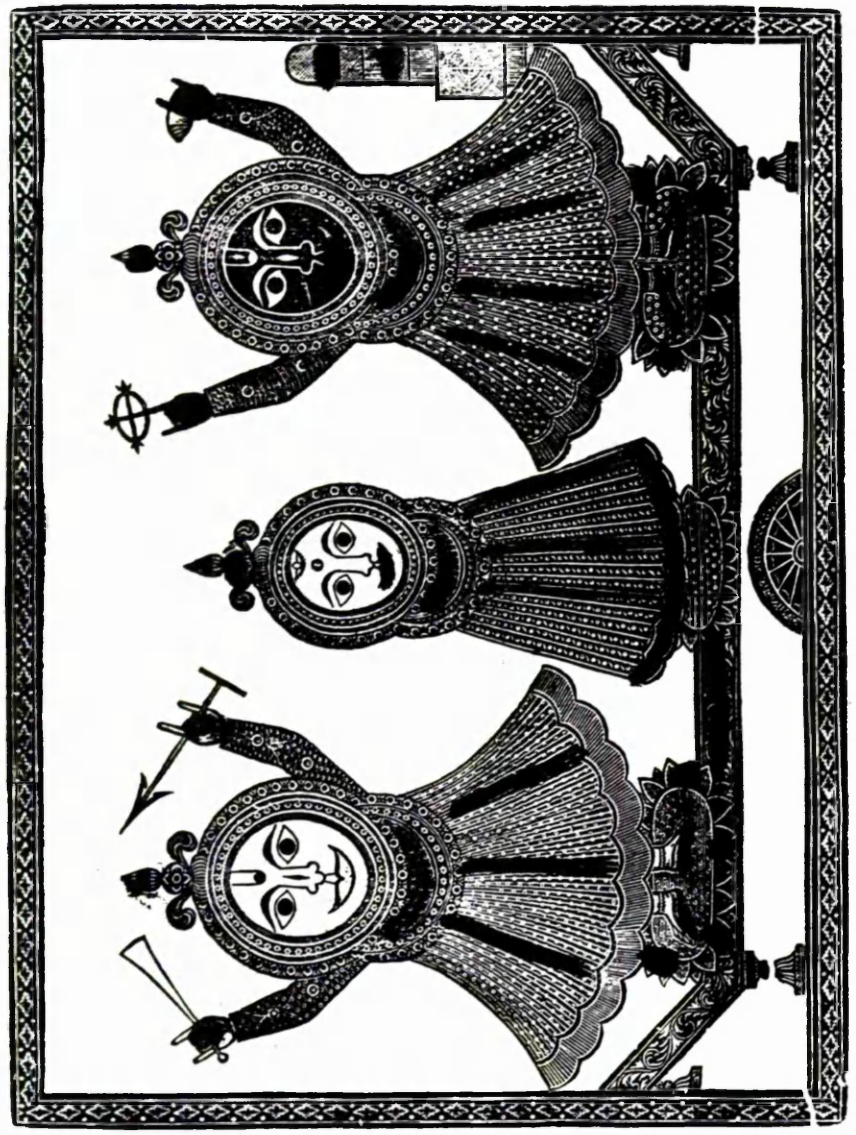
Border: Chequered (*jāli*).

Figure 21: ***Balabhadra, Subhadrā and Jagannātha***



Decoration of background: Due to shortage of space *Lakshmi*, *Sarasvatī*, and *Madana Mohana* (*Visnu*) have been substituted by marks of white (*sankhapatā*) at the bottom of the painting.

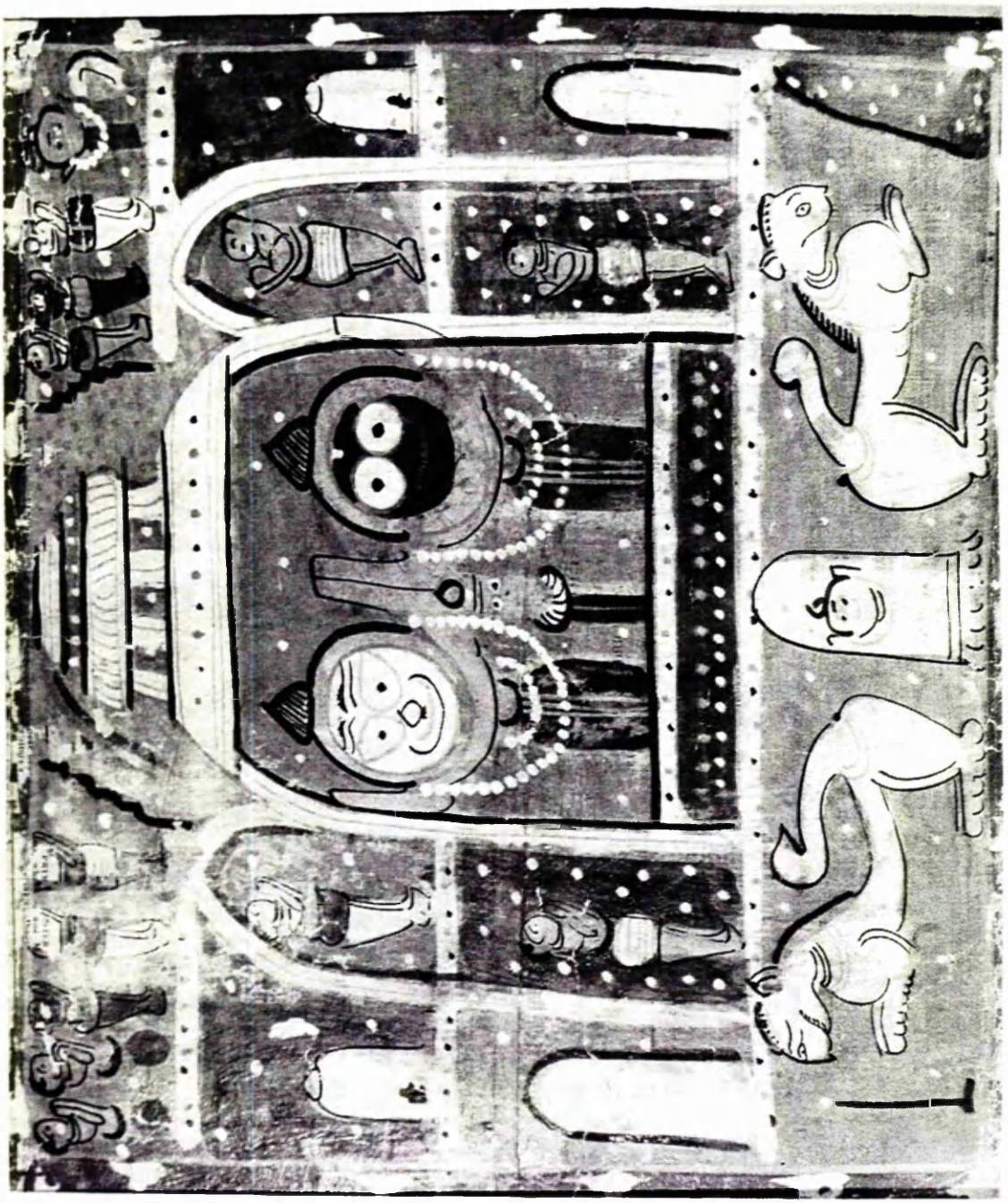
Figure 21a: ***Balabhadra*, *Subhadrā*, and *Jagannātha*.**



Early Bengali metal plate reproduction on paper (10" x 13.5"). By courtesy of the Wellcome Institute, London, video disk number 47006. Although no specific date is given the water coloured reproduction is likely to be from the late 19th century.

Figure 21b: ***Balabhadra*****,** ***Subhadrā*****, and** ***Jagannātha***. Chromolithograph produced by the Ravi Varma Press, approximately 1910-20.

Figure 22: Chaukhuntā (square shaped). By courtesy of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, Cat.No.:1967.208. Acquired by W. G. Archer in Puri in December 1932 and given to the museum 1967.



Motif: The *Jagannātha* triad is depicted in its shrine, surrounded by four other (*lingam*-shaped) temples situated in the area of the main temple. Four priests (*pandās*) are worshipping the triad. The ten avatars of *Visnu* are depicted at the top of the painting, the ninth in the form of *Jagannātha* rather than *Buddha*. Below the deities, two lions (*singha*) flank the *Patitapābana* image of *Jagannātha*.

Material and size: Newspaper (Friday, 27 August 1931 or 1932), 14" x 16".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, blue, and green.

Border: Flowers (*phula*).

Decoration of background: Dots (*topi*)

Figure 23: ***Thiā Badhiā*** (a depiction of the *Jagannātha* triad in the *Jagannātha* temple). Acquired by Mr. Jagannātha Das (former chief designer in the Handicraft Complex), Chitrakāra Sahi, Puri 1946.

Motif: *Balabhadra, Subhadrā, Jagannātha,* and the wheel of *Visnu* (*Sudarshana Chakra*) are depicted in the main shrine of the *Jagannātha* temple. Beneath them are three priests (*pandās*) placed above the conch (*sankha*), the symbol of Puri. At the base of the tower, *Siva* and *Brahmā* stand on either side of the *Garuda* pillar. Of *Visnu's* ten avatars depicted at the top of the painting, *Buddha* has been replaced by *Jagannātha*.

Below this panel on each side of the tower there are eight panels. The panels on the left of the tower from top to bottom depict the following:

a) *Kānchi bijaya,*

b) *Ananta sayana,*

c) three shrines,

d) a shrine for *Ganesh,*

e) priests (*pandās*) at the southern temple gate,

f) shrines,

g) shrines,

h) priests (*pandās*), *Jagannātha* and *Balabhadra* caught while stealing flowers (*dayanā chori*) from a garden.

i) preparation of food,

j) car festival.

Figure 23: *Thiā Badhiā*

The panels on the right of the tower from top to bottom depict the following:

a) *Lakshmana* and *Rāma* fighting *Rābana*,

b) brothers of *Hanumān* (monkeys),

c) shrines,

d) a shrine for the goddess *Bimala*,

e) priests (*pandās*) at the northern gate,

f) shrines

g) shrines of *Ganesh* and *Siva*,

h) the bathing platform (*snāna vedi*),

i) the festival *Chandan jātrā*,

j) golden *Krishna* (*sunāra Gauranga*), the ladder leading to heaven (*swarga nisuni*), and the Bay of Bengal.

Material and size: *Patti*, 10" x 12".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, blue, green, and reddish brown. With the exception of the green and light blue, the colours are all bright primary ones.

Borders:

a) elephant (*hāti*),

b) snake (*sāpa*),

c) swan (*hansa*),

d) petals (*pākhudā*), (the border framing the temple itself),

e) curved fly (*banka māchhi*), separates the bottom panel from the other panels.

Decoration of background: Decoration with white (*sankhapatā*), shrines, pilgrims and birds are depicted between the different figures. The dots around the depiction of the car festival indicate human beings.

Only one painter, Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.) from Raghurājpur, could identify all the figures depicted in the *thiā badhiā* painting. In general even painters who painted this motif had difficulties when asked to explain what they were painting and referred me to Jagannātha. Most painters found it difficult to articulate who the shrines served - the number of explanations equalling the number of painters asked[18].

Some might be tempted to see this as a sign of the current tourist production which has resulted in an increasing number of painters. There is, however, no reason to believe that former painters necessarily knew the "right answer". The depictions of the shrines within the *Jagannātha* temple might always have been interpreted in various ways.

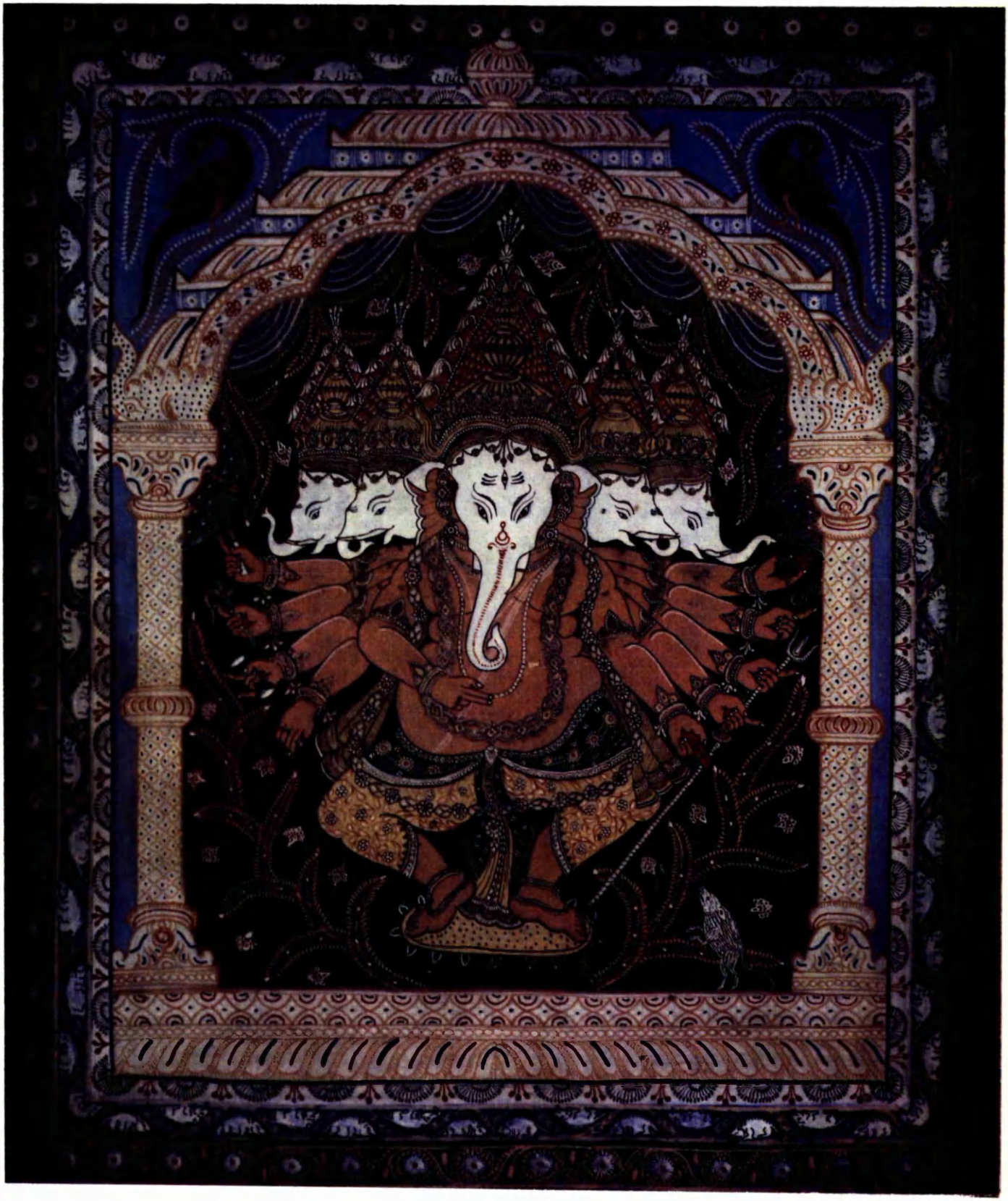
Figure 24: ***Pāncha Mukha Ganesh*** (*Ganesh* in his five headed form). By courtesy of the Museum of Mankind, London, accession number: 1977 AS 4.12.

Artist/s: Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.), Raghurājpur, Puri district, 1954. The painting was made as an entry for a competition arranged by Halina Zealey in 1954 in the Senate Hall of Utkal University in Cuttack (see chapter 2, p.112; Das 1982:89). Jagannātha Mahāpātra came first. As Williams notes Zealey must have had a strong liking for refined, detailed painting (1988:11).

Motif: On *Ganesh's* left is his vehicle (*bahana*), the rat. An arch (*khilāna*) decorated with a drape frames *Ganesh*. A peacock is placed on each side of the arch which ends in crocodiles (*kumbhira*). The jewellery of *Ganesh* has been minutely executed. With his right and left, front hands *Ganesh* allays fear (*abhya*). His second and third left hands hold a trident (*trisula*), the fourth a snake (*sapā*), and the fifth a sweet (*ladu*). In his right hands

[18] In some cases I have, therefore, not mentioned the given deity of a shrine.

Figure 24: ***Pāncha Mukha Ganesh***



Ganesh holds a rosary (*japa*), a drum (*dambaru*), an elephant goad (*ankusa*), and a tooth (*danta*).

Material and size: *Patti*, 12" x 9.5".

Colours: Black (*hingula*), white (*sankha*), dark and light red (*hingula*), dark (almost lilac) and light blue (*nila*) (indigo), reddish brown (*geru*), and grey[19].

Borders:

a) round stem (*demphi golei*),

b) Rats (*musā*),

c) half flower, a pattern called *pinchha.*

Decoration of background: Trees and leaves (*gachhapatra*).

Figure 24a: Arch from the Muktesvara temple, Bhubaneshwar[20]

It is uncertain when the crocodile arch was first introduced in *patta* paintings. The motif is almost certainly inspired by the arches of the Orissan temples. Figure 24a shows an arch (*khilāna*) from the Muktesvara temple in Bhubaneshwar, which has the characteristic crocodiles (*kumbhira*).

A *patta* made in the early 1950s by the late Raghu Mahāranā (E.3) from Dānda Sāhi depicts *Krishna* playing his flute in the company of four *gopis*[21]. Compared to figure 24 the painting (which measures 17" x 19.5") is more roughly executed. *Krishna* is placed on a lotus throne under which the painter's signature appears in Oriya. It should be noted that the faces of

[19] This painting is painted with traditional stone colours presumably because it was made as an entry for the competition.

[20] This temple has been described in detail by Dehejia (1979:141-145).

[21] The painting is part of the Museum of Mankind's Zealey collection (accession number: N1977 As 4.10). Because of the expense I could not reproduce it here.

Figure 24a: Arch from the Muktesvara temple, Bhubaneshwar

the figures have not only been delineated with a thin black line (*saru kalā*), but also a grey one. This style of painting can also be found in contemporary works (see figure 30) and is commonly referred to with the English term *shade*.

Another *patta*, from the 1950s, depicting *bastra harana* ought to be mentioned because of the strikingly naturalistic manner in which the figures have been executed[22]. Although the ornamentation and lines of this *patta* are of a more refined execution than those of the painting mentioned above (*Krishna* playing his flute), they are not as finely executed as the ones in *Pāncha Mukha Ganesh* by Jagannātha Mahāpātra.

Figure 25: *Krishna* and *gopis*. By courtesy of the National Museum, (Anthropological section), New Delhi, accession number:71.638.

Artist/s: The painting is signed in Oriya by "Sri Benudhara Mahāpātra (C.1.-b-i-l.), *chitra silpi*" (picture artist). Puri district, 1971.

Motif: *Krishna* stands on a lotus throne holding his flute. To his left stands a *gopi* offering him betel (*pāna*), while another gently waves a whisk (*chanara*) while holding a lotus (*padma*). At his right a *gopi* offers something to drink in a pot (*pātra*) and another holds a lotus and a fan (*binchanā*). The four *gopis* all have tattoos (*chitā*) on their arms[23]. *Krishna* stands in front of a cow (*gai*) and on his right a peacock (*mayura*) is depicted. A cow is placed between each pair of *gopis*. The clothes, ornaments, and toes of *Krishna* and the *gopis* are painted in minute detail. Note, for example, the toe-nails and the anklets (*paunji*).

Material and size: *Patti*, 57.5" x 29.5".

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[22] This painting is likewise part of the Museum of Mankind's Zealey collection (accession number: 1977 AS 4.9). Because of the expense I could not reproduce it here.

[23] Like several of the older women in Raghurājpur.

Colours: Black, white, yellow, dark and light blue, and dark and light green.

Figure 25: ***Krishna*** **and** ***gopis***

Borders:

a) round stem (*demphi golei*),

b) snake (*sāpa*).

Decoration of background: Squirrels (*gunduchi cusā*), two peacocks (*mayura*), and various birds are painted in the kadamba tree[24]. The background has been decorated with designs of five petals (*pāncha angulià topi*), grass (*ghāsa*), and clusters of dots (*punji*).

Figure 26: ***Mahisā Mardani,*** (slaying the demon *Mahisā*). By courtesy of the National Museum (Anthropological section), New Delhi, accession number: 71.638.

Artist/s: The painting has been signed in Oriya: "Benudhara Mahāpātra (c.1.-b-i-l.), Master Craftsman". Puri district, 1971.

Motif: *Durga* decapitates the buffalo demon *Mahisā* and her lion (*singha*) bites the arm of *Mahisā. Durgā* holds the following attributes in her right hands (beginning with her first hand): a bow (*dhanu*), a bell (*ghanti*), a snake (*sāpa*), a conch (*sankha*), and a shield (*dhāla*). In her left hands she holds: a trident (*trisula*), a sword (*khadga*), a wheel (*chakra*) and an arrow (*shara*). This image is a two dimensional representation of the *murtīs* used in *Durgā pujā.* The image is likely to be a result of the painters response to the requests of their main customers: the Bengali tourists. The painting is made in a standard Calcutta design not unlike the chromolithograph produced by the Calcutta Art Studio in the early 1880s (figure 26a).

Material and size: *Patti*, 43.5" x 36".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, light blue, and green.

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[24] In Oriya the birds are known as (from left): *Kākatuā, Haladi basanta, Sidhā suā, Olata suā, Mayura, Kajala pāti,* and *Suā.*

Figure 26: ***Mahisā Mardani***

Borders:

a) round stem (*demphi golei*), (barely visible),

b) curved fly (*banka māchhi*),

c) snake (*sāpa*).

Decoration of background: The figures are placed on a lotus throne (*padma singhāsana*) and framed by two pillars (*khamba*) which support an arch (*khilāna*). A drape (*chānduā*) hangs from the arch. Squirrels, rats, monkeys, and parrots are placed on the arch. The head of a crocodile (*kumbhira*) is placed on top of each pillar. The background is filled out with trees and leaves (*gachhapatra*), designs of five petals (*pāncha anguliā topi*), and clusters of dots (*punji*). The dresses of *Durgā* and the demon are neatly decorated with intricate patterns. They both wear ornaments and *Durga's* arms are adorned with tattoos (*chitās*). Her fingers and toes have been executed with an emphasis on detail, so that, for instance, the nails are visible.

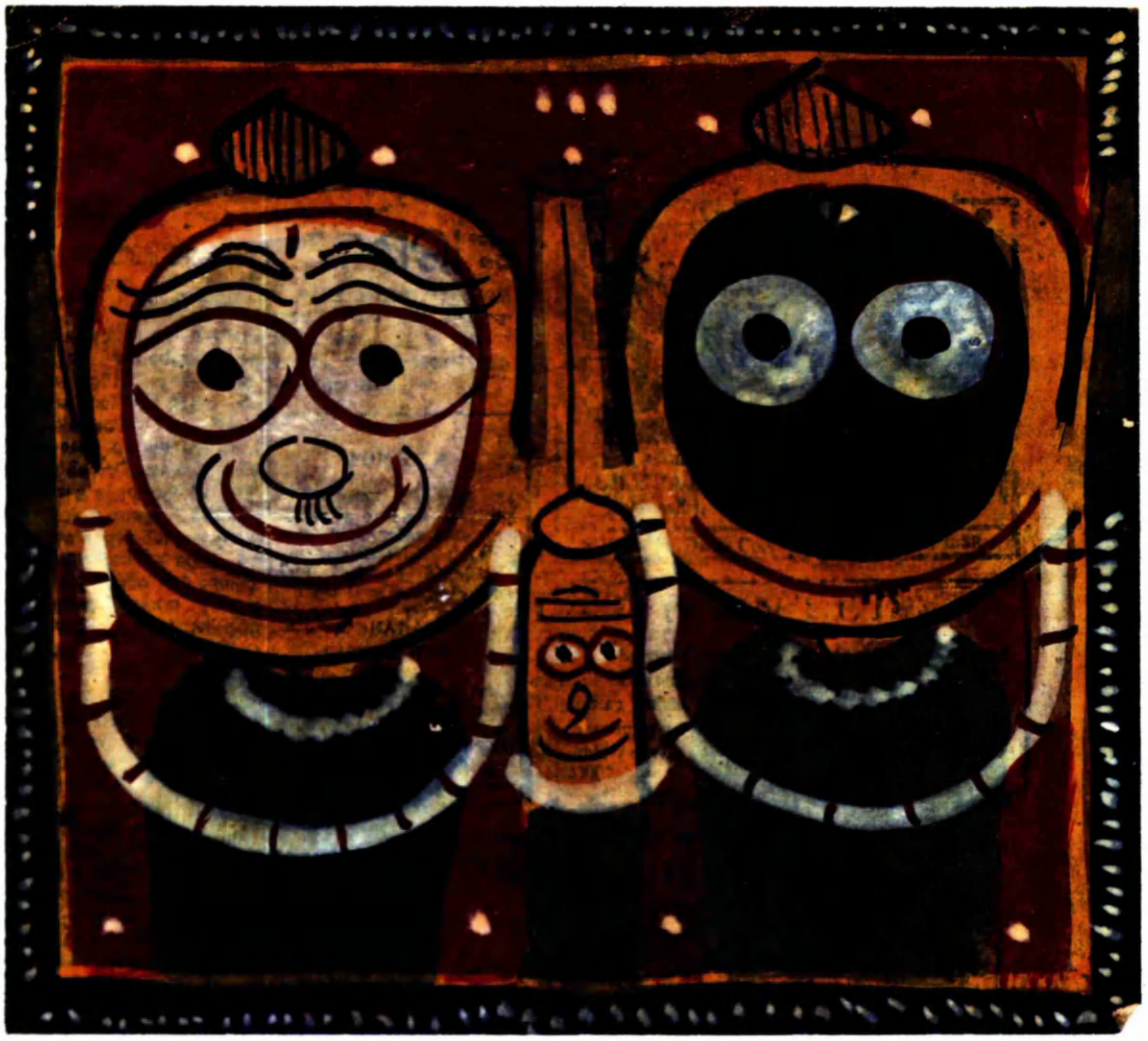
Figure 26a: *Durgā* killing the demon *Mahisā*, chromolithograph produced by The Calcutta Art Studio in the early 1880s. By courtesy of the Ashmolean Museum.

Section II

Contemporary *Patta* Paintings

When compared to the paintings from the 1920s, a brief look at the current paintings, indicates that the style of *patta* paintings, not surprisingly, has undergone some changes. The number of colours have increased and current *pattas* are painted with a variety of what are mainly secondary colours. Generally, however, the figures depicted have changed little. Contemporary painters strive to refine the execution of paintings but, in general, continue the characteristic silhouette depiction of heads and feet.

Figure 27: *Balabhadra*, *Subhadrā*, and *Jagannātha*. A painting made for pilgrims.



Artist/s: Chandramani Mahāpātra (mother of Dīnabandhu Mahāpātra [I.2.3.1.]), Raghurājpur, 1991.

Motif: *Balabhadra, Subhadrā*, and *Jagannātha*.

Material and size: Newspaper, 8" x 8".

Colours: black (*kalā*), white (*safeda*), red (*sindūra*), yellow (*pihuli*), green (*pachā*), and reddish brown (*geru*). With the exception of black, all colours used in contemporary paintings are powder water colours purchased in the bazaar either in Puri or Chandanpur[25]. Unless otherwise mentioned, the English colour terms used in this section refer to the colours above.

Borders:

a) wavy (*lahara*),

b) dots (*topi*).

Decoration of background: Dots (*topi*).

Figure 27a: *Balabhadra*, *Subhadra*, and *Jagannātha*. Contemporary print, Puri bazaar.

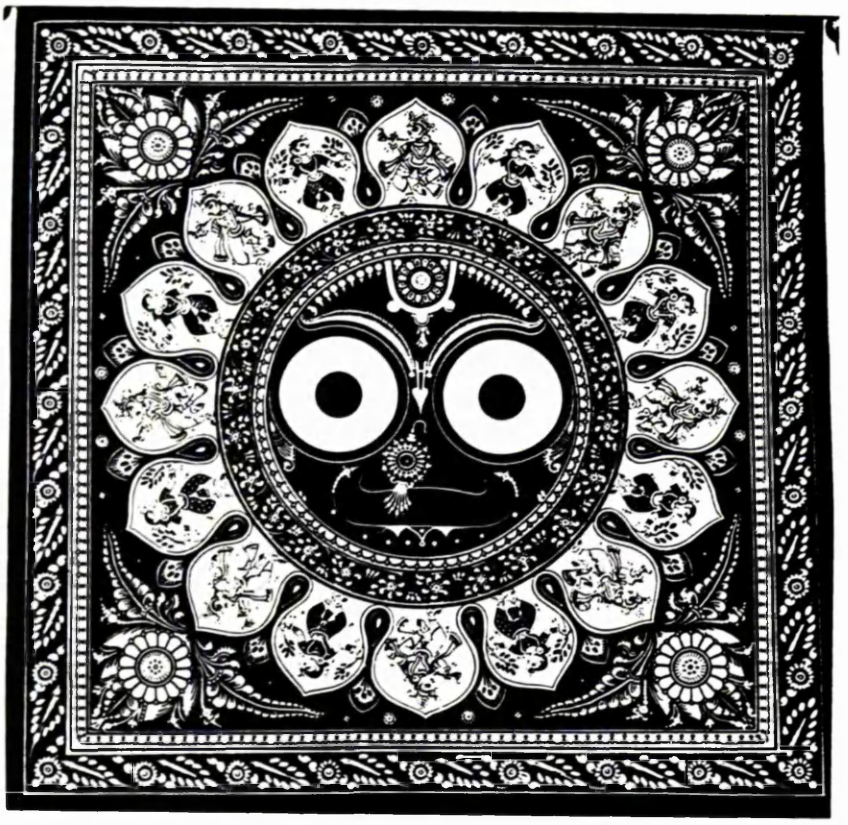
[25] Some painters still produce the colour black from the soot of oil lamps.

Motif: *Balabhadra, Subhadrā*, and *Jagannātha*.

Material and size: Paper, 5" x 6".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, green, and blue (*khanda nila*).

Figure 28: ***Rāsa Jagannātha***



Name of artist/s: Padmalābha Mahāranā (nephew of Lakshmana Mahāranā) and younger fellow apprentices of Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.), Raghurājpur, 1992.

Motif: *Jagannātha* in the centre of a lotus flower of which each leaf depicts either *Krishna* or *Rādhā*. The ancient lotus design is very popular amongst

Bengali tourists, to whom it is familiar, if nothing else, from the popular plastic stickers for sale at the main road (*bada dānda*) in Puri (see figure 28a).

Material and size: *Patti*, 24" x 24".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, green, and blue.

Borders:

a) bent fly (*banka māchhi*),

b) a design known as *kāngulā*.

Decoration of background: Flowers (*phula*) and clusters of dots (*punji*).

28a: Plastic sticker showing *Jagannātha* in lotus design.

Place and year: Puri bazaar, 1992.

Motif: *Jagannātha*'s eyes and face.

Material and size: plastic, 4" x 4".

Colours: Black, white, red, and yellow.

Figure 29: *Pāncha Mandira* (five temples).

Artist/s: Lakshmana Mahāranā and his sisters' son Padmalābha, Raghurājpur, 1992.

Motif: The triad is placed in the principal shrine of the temple. The ten incarnations of *Visnu* are illustrated above the temple. The panels to the left of the shrine from top to bottom depict:

a) the legend *Kānchi bijaya* (see figure 20 and 35),

b) the eternal snake *Ananta sayana*,

c) a temple of *Lakshmi*,

d) the *Garuda* pillar and *Brahmā*,

e) a temple of *Sarasvatī*,

f) the supplier of food, *Jogāniā*,

g) *Rāma* shooting the golden deer, an illusion called *Māyā Mruga*,

h) *Visnu*.

To the right of the central shrine from top to bottom the following illustrations are depicted:

a) *Lakshmana* and *Rāma* shooting *Rābana*,

b) a temple of *Hanumān*,

c) a temple of *Bimalā*,

d) *Siva* and a *rājā*,

e) *Visnu*, *Nitāi* and *Gauranga*,

f) *Jagannātha* and *Balabhadra* caught while stealing flowers (*dayanā chori*) from a garden.

The panel below the tower depicts from left to right:

a) the temple kitchen (*rosaghara*),

b) a priest (*pandā*) worshipping the triad,

c) the bathing platform (*Snāna vedi*),

d) deities sailing in a temple tank at the festival *Chandan Jātrā*.

The bottom panel depicts from left to right:

a) the car festival (*Ratha Jātrā*),

b) the lion gate with the *Jagannātha* image (*Patitapābana*) for people not

allowed within the temple,

c) the ladder (*nisuni*) leading to heaven (*swarga*),

d) the Bay of Bengal.

Material and size: *Patti*, 2 x 3 feet.

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, blue, and green.

Borders:

a) fly (māchhi)

b) wavy (*lahara*)

Decoration of background: Design of five petals (*pāncha anguliā topi*), dots (*topi*), birds, and small shrines.

Figure 30: ***Ananta Sayana*** (The cosmic snake)

Artist/s: Gokul Behari Patnaik (D.), Bhubaneshwar, 1992.

Motif: Figure 30 is a segment of the very popular motif *Ananta Sayana*. Rather than the mass of figures commonly depicted in contemporary calendar prints (see figure 30b) Gokul has selected a few key figures. *Lakshmi* is seated on the eternal snake and greeted by *Indra*, *Aswini*, and *Kumara* (back row) and *Garuda*, *Ganesh*, the sage *Nārada*, and *Hayagriba* (front row). These figures are relatively elongated and slim compared to the figures commonly made in Raghurājpur. Rather than decoration with white (*sankhapatā*) or clusters of dots (*punji*) Gokul preferred to paint what he called *natural* looking clouds and a *natural* looking sea. The hands of all figures except *Ganesh* have pink outlines popularly known as *shade* amongst the painters.

Material: Tassar (*mathā*), a kind of raw silk.

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, green, blue, grey, and reddish brown.

Figure 30: Ananta Sayana

Borders: A recent style of border which does not have a name but is simply referred to as "border" (*dhadi*).

Figure 30a: ***Ananta Sayana***. Early Bengali metal plate reproduction on paper (9.7" x 14.3"), late 19th century. By courtesy of the Wellcome Institute, London, video print number 45620. This reproduction indicates the popularity of the motif also in the late 19th century. The motif illustrates the earlier adoption of western elements: *Lakshmi* is depicted with a halo and the figure at her left give associations to one of the Three Wise Men or, perhaps, Queen Victoria.

Figure 30b: ***Ananta Sayana***, chromolithograph by J.B. Khanna & Co.

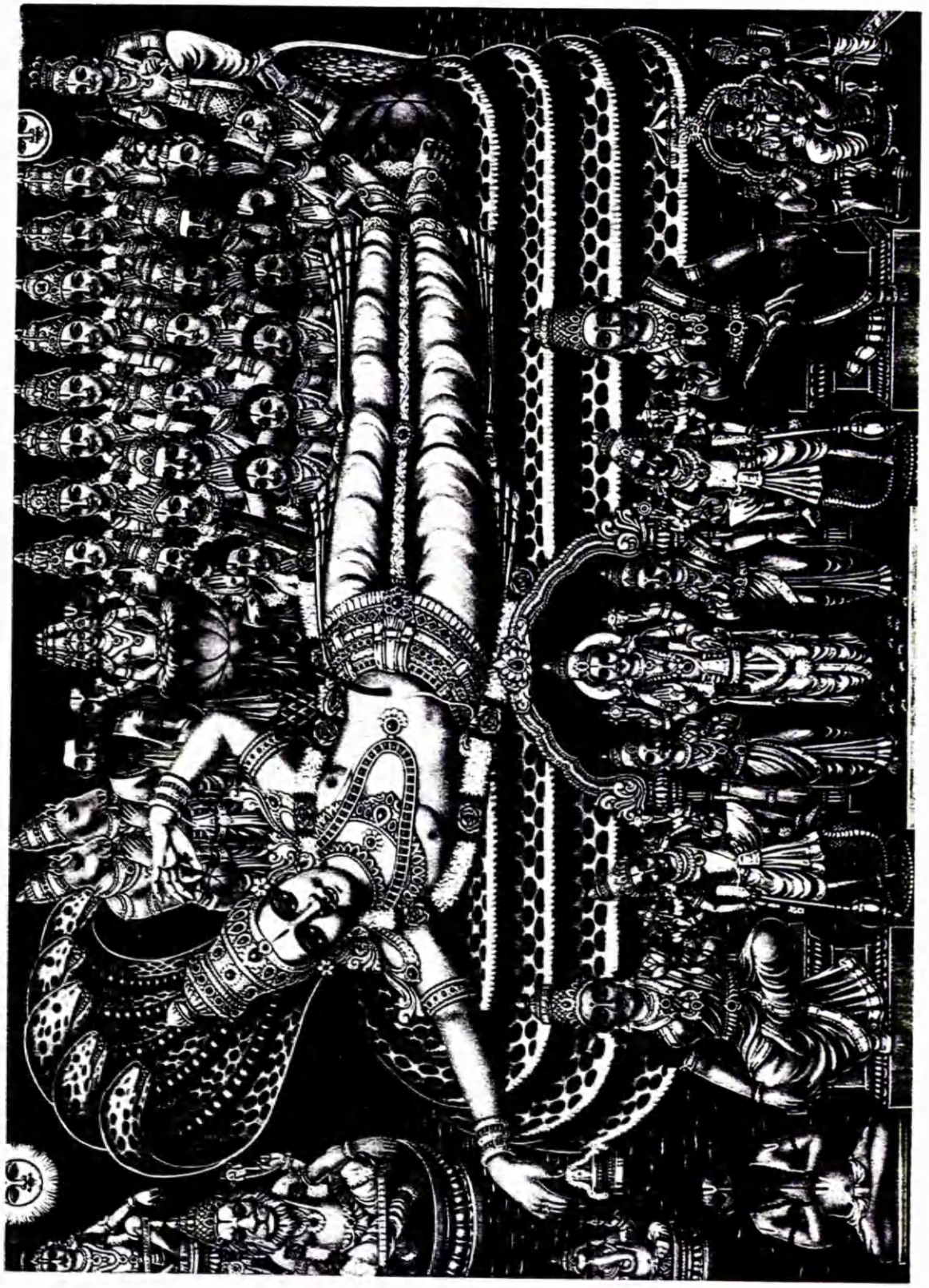
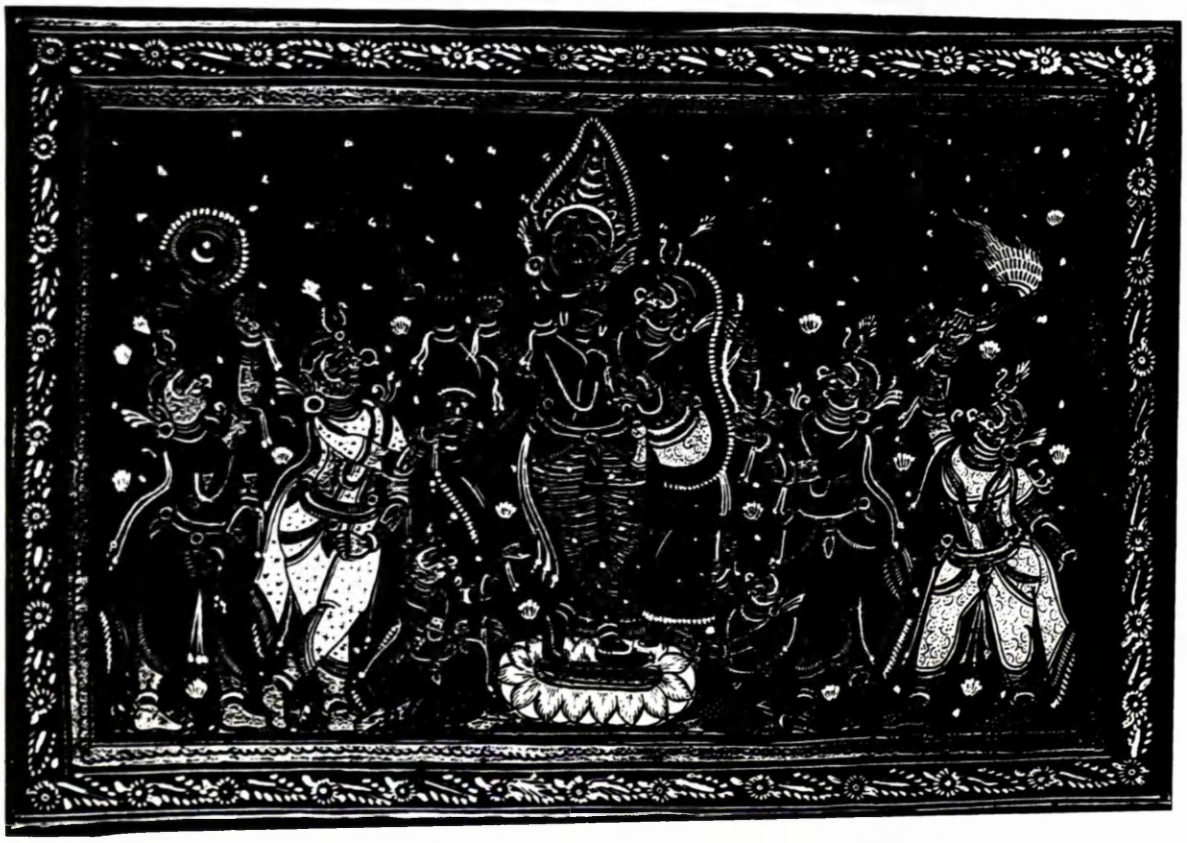


Figure 31: ***Rādhākrisna***



Artist/s: X, Dānda Sāhi, 1992.

Motif: This very popular motif (see figure 31a) depicts *Krishna* standing in front of a *kadamba* tree with his beloved *Rādhā* on a lotus flower surrounded by *gopis*. *Krishna* faces the viewer in a position which is an exception to the convention commonly followed in which human figures are depicted with the body in a frontal position and the face and legs in profile[26]. The figures are relatively short and stocky compared to the earlier paintings from the Indian Museum, Calcutta (figures 13-17). There are several indications that this painting was quickly executed for sale to

[26] *Lakshmi*, *Durgā* in her aspect of *Mahisāsuramardinī*, *Natarāja* (*Siva* dancing the *tāndaba* dance), dancing *Ganesh*, and *Lakshmi-Nārāyana* are some of the exceptions to this convention.

western tourists. One of them is the proportions of the figures - their legs are rather short compared to their torsos. Another is *Krishna*'s rather unstable posture - it looks as if his feet might slip off the lotus at any moment. A third sign is the very uneven *kāngulā* border. This motif is very common in Raghurājpur and an example of what painters generally call "work made for business" (*byabasāya kāma*).

Material and size: *Patti*, 1.5 x 1 feet.

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, green, and blue.

Borders:

a) curved fly (*banka māchhi*),

b) *kāngulā*.

Decoration of background: Trees and leaves (*gachhapatra*), design of five petals (*pāncha anguliā topi*) and clusters of dots (*punji*).

Figure 31a: ***Rādhākrisna***, chromolithograph by the Calcutta Art Studio. This chromolithograph from the 1980s depicts *Krishna* and *Rādhā* on lotus pedestals. *Krishna* stands in the position used in figure 31 and he and *Rādhā* are illustrated with 3/4 of their faces turned towards the viewer.

Figure 31a: ***Rādhākrisna***

Figure 32: ***Nābakeli*** (Playing boat).

Artist/s: X, Dāndā Sāhi, 1992.

Motif: *Krishna* as well as the four *gopis* are short and stocky. All *gopis* wear saris with distinct designs and their toes and those of *Krishna* have been executed with great care. Compared to this depiction the figures in figure 16 are longer and more graceful and convey a sense of balance not found in the current version. Compare, for example, the *gopi* sitting on the very left of the boat in the earlier *patta* with the *gopi* sitting on the very right in the current *patta*.

Material and size: *Patti*, 18" x 12".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, green, blue, and reddish brown.

Borders:

a) curved fly (*banka māchhi*),

b) wavy (*lahara*).

Decoration of background: Trees and leaves (*gachhapatra*). The painting was not complete when photographed, decoration with white (*sankhapatā*) and border flowers (*dhadi phula*) were yet to be made.

Figure 33: ***Giri Gobardhana*** (lifting the mountain Gobardhana).

Artist/s: X, Dāndā Sāhi, 1992.

Motif: This very popular motif depicts *Krishna* who has uprooted the mount Gobardhana and holds it above his head as an umbrella. He thereby

protects his father *Nanda* and the other cowherds from the heavy showers caused by the anger of *Indra*. *Krishna* and his parents *Nanda* and *Jashodā* stand in front of a *kadamba* tree and two cowherds assist *Krishna* supporting the grass covered mountain[27]. As in the parallel calendar print (figure 33b) lightning and rain is indicated by white lines. Compared to the complex illustration below, this version of *Giri Gobardhana* is rather sparse indicating a brisk execution meant for the broader tourist market.

Material and size: *Patti*, 18" x 12".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, green, and blue.

Borders:

a) curved (*banka māchhi*),

b) *kāngulā*.

Decoration of background: Trees and leaves (*gachhapatra*), design of five petals (*pāncha anguliā topi*), and clusters of dots (*punji*).

[27] *Krishna* was born to *Debaki*, the sister of *Kansā*, who killed almost all of his sisters' sons. When *Krishna* was born, however, his father *Basudeva* brought him to the cowherds and exchanged his son with the daughter of *Jashodā*.

Figure 33a: ***Giri Gobardhana***. Early Bengali metal plate reproduction on paper (9.5" x 13.2"), late 19th century. By courtesy of the Wellcome Institute, London, video disk number 46990. Compared to the persons in figure 33, those of 33a appear slightly more stylised. This version is generally more complex than figure 33 and incorporates activities not directly related to the central theme, such as a man milking a cow.

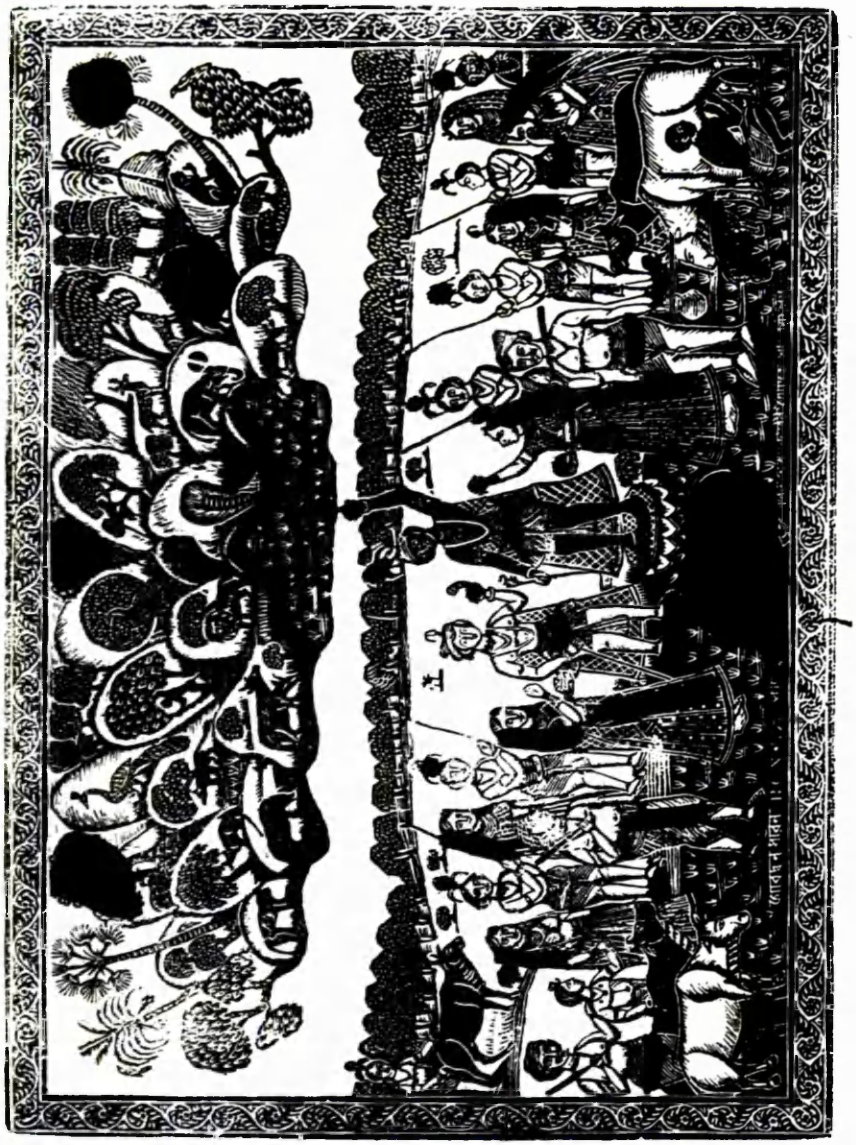
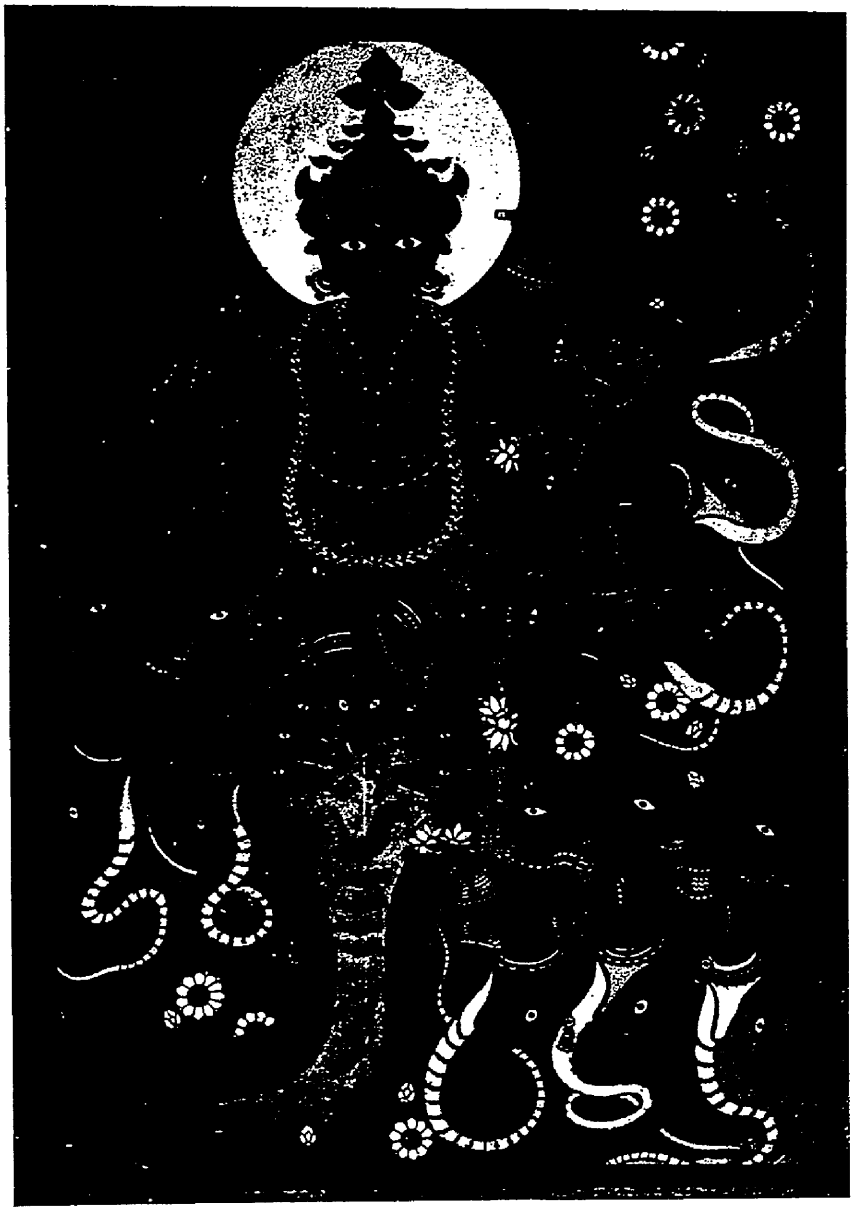


Figure 33b: ***Giri Gobardhana***. Chromolithograph by B.G.Sharma, published by "Sharma Picture Publication".

Figure 34: ***Kāliyadalana*** (subduing the serpent *Kāliya*).



Artist/s: Binod Mahāranā (G.), Bhubaneshwar, 1990.

Motif: *Krishna* subdues the black serpent *Kāliya* which had poisoned the river *Jamunā*. The artist has developed a classical motif introducing elements from calendar prints (the halo) (see figure 34a) and naturalist touches (the depiction of the torso). Like in figure 34a the serpent deities offer *Krishna* lotuses rather than the papayas of the earlier version (figure 17).

Unlike the classical motif, *Krishna* has not been depicted in the centre of the image. *Krishna*'s position slightly left of centre is balanced by the depiction of the *Jamunā* river. Binod has signed the painting in the left top corner because he wanted people to know it was his design and moreover he was satisfied with the result of his efforts.

Material and size: *Tassar*, 20" x 14".

Colours: Black, white, red, very light red, shades of light blue, dark and light green, shades of yellow, brown (*matia*), and grey.

Borders: Binod reasoned that anything but a plain border would deflect attention from the motif.

Decoration of background: In accordance with the reason for choice of borders the background has been kept plain. There are, however, water lilies on the river.

Figure 34a: ***Kāliyadalana***, chromolithograph by J.B. Khanna & Co. Note in particular *Krishna*'s halo and the offerings of the serpent maidens.

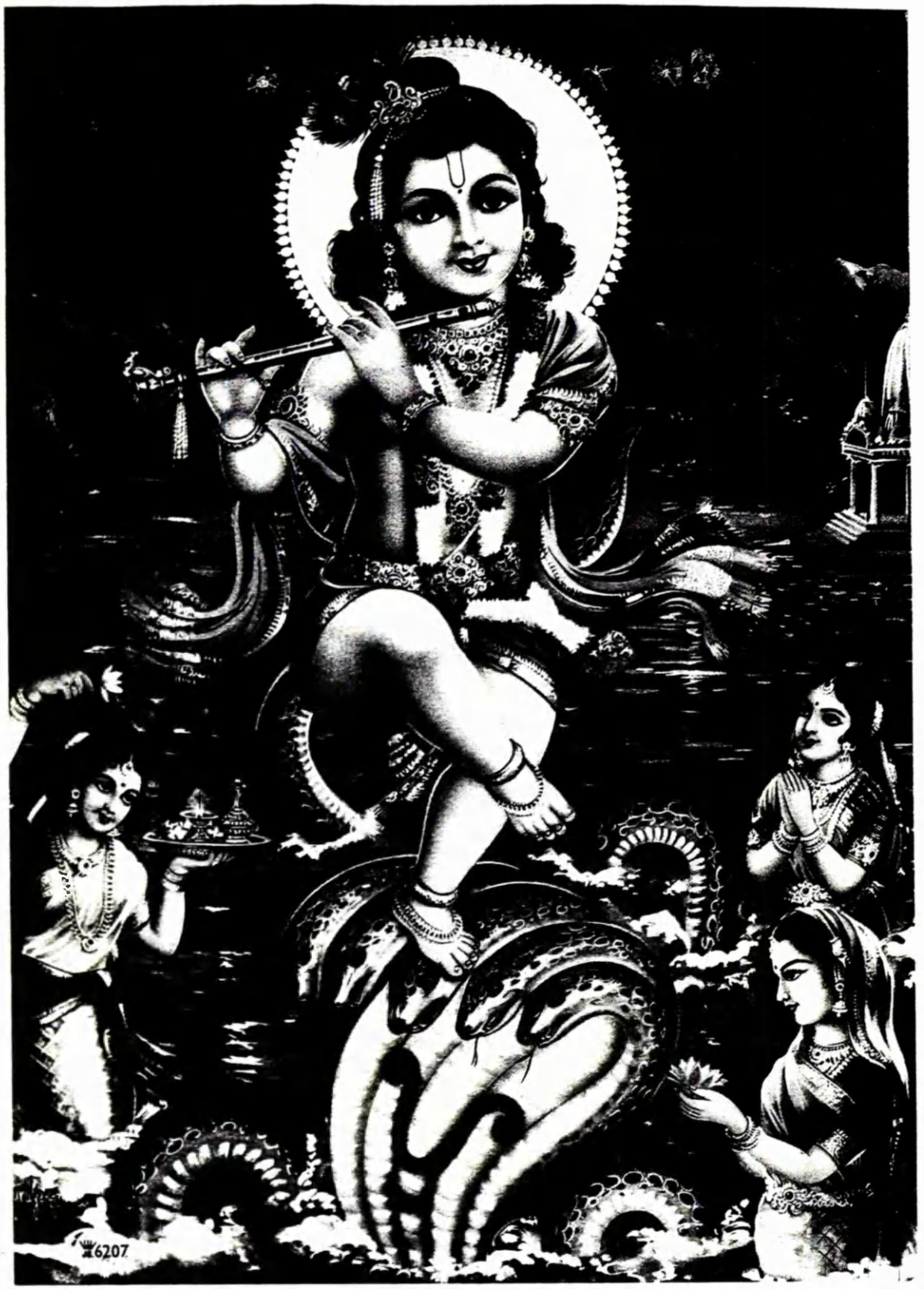


Figure 35: ***Kānchi Bijaya*** (victory over the kingdom of Kānchi).

Artist/s: Tophāna Mahāranā assisted by younger apprentices of Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.), Raghurājpur, 1992.

Motif: *Balabhadra* and *Jagannātha* are depicted in the human form normally used when painting kings or saints. *Mānika*, the milkmaid, depicted in the "delicate posture" (*lalitā-bhangī*) commonly used for females, receives a ring from *Jagannātha*. The depiction of the figures and particularly the horses has a naturalistic touch evident, for example, in the depiction of teeth.

When tourists (or anthropologists) inquire about the motif the painters of Raghurājpur relate the following legend, popularly known as *Kānchi bijaya*: When the travellers *Balabhadra* and *Jagannātha* came her way the

milkmaid *Mānika* gave them curd, a courtesy for which she received a ring. When she later showed it to the *Rājā* of Orissa, (*Rājā* Purushottama Deva, 1472-97) he recognised it as a sign from *Jagannātha*, who had obviously heard his prayers and had come to subdue his enemy the *Rājā* of Kānchi.

Compared to the light red (*sindura*) background colour in this painting, the background colour in the earlier version of *Kānchi bijaya* (figure 20) is bright red, characteristic of the traditional colour *hingula*. Grey hills have been introduced in this painting to provide a sense of location.

Material and size: *Patti*, 33" x 18".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, green, and grey.
The (secondary) colours of this painting appear dull compared to the colours used in the earlier version (figure 20).

Borders:
a) curved fly (*banka māchhi*),
b) *kāngulā*.

Decoration of background: Trees and leaves (*gachhapatra*), design of five petals (*pāncha anguliā topi*), clusters of dots (*punji*), grass (*ghāsa*), and mountains (*pāhāda*).

Story Paintings

It was the then Chief Designer of the Handicraft Centre, Jagannātha Das, who in the 1960s developed a *patta* design structured so as to permit linear reading. He had no background in *patta* painting but had completed a degree in Arts at Santiniketan, Bengal, before he returned to Orissa in the late 1940s.

The new *patta* design (popularly known as "story painting") was, among other things, inspired by the *thiā badhiā* motif which depicts in panels the *Jagannātha* triad, the various temples, and activities taking place within the *Jagannātha* temple. The arrangement of illustrations must be described as spatial rather than temporal although some of the shrines appear in a different location within the actual temple complex from that indicated in the painting[28].

A spatial arrangement of visual narratives has been, and still is, common in an Indian context. Narratives, whether in the form of paintings, painted murals, terracotta panels, or stone reliefs have generally been structured with a view to space rather than time. The *paṛs* of *Pābūjī*, long narrative cloth-paintings from Rajasthan, are one example of paintings which are organized spatially rather than temporally. The *paṛs* have been described as a "representation of epic geography, a sort of epic map", the fundamental principle behind the organisation of the scenes being the primacy of place over time (Smith 1991: 56-57)[29]. Dehejia has suggested the existence of seven distinctive narrative modes in early India (1990). One of them, the synoptic narration, depicts multiple episodes from a story within a single visual field and, says Dehejia, their temporal sequence is not communicated (1991:49). Examples from a more recent medium, that of popular Hindu oleographs, have been shown to represent the narrative events in an arrangement which allows for various non-linear readings. Multi-frame narrative oleographs belong to a tradition of visual images which allows time to be manipulated through the organization of pictorial space (Pinney 1992:50-57).

There are, however, examples of Indian paintings which have a dominant chronological narrative. Such a temporal principle of organisation is characteristic of the Bengal scrolls which in terms of style and themes, are

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[28] It is rather misleading when M. Archer commenting on a *thiā badhiā* notes that "The maximum amount of 'guidebook' information is imparted" (1979:112).

[29] Joshi has described how the reading of the *paṛ* evolves around the central figures rather than chronologically from left to right (1976:58).

closely related to the Orissan *patta* paintings[30]. Both early and contemporary examples of scroll paintings are sequentially (vertically) ordered (Blurton 1989:427) except in cases where an illustration contains two distinct temporal events[31]. Other examples of contemporary, Indian visual imagery which are structured according to temporal progression include *Amar Chitra Kathā* (cartoon booklets) and some popular prints.

However, according to Das, his most important source of inspiration for the linear "story painting" design were the early (second half of first century BC) stupa of the Sanchi monuments in Madhya Pradesh[32]. Like the narratives decorating one of the Ajanta caves (Dehejia 1991:48), these carvings are characterised by a continuous narration. It was in particular the scenes from the life of Gautama *Buddha* which had stimulated Das[33].

The "story painting" design contains most commonly a central motif surrounded by related and chronologically ordered illustrations. An example is the complex illustration of *Rāma's* consecration depicted in the centre of the painting and surrounded by smaller motifs showing *Rāma's* life and deeds (figure 41). A "story painting" might also refer to a number of chronologically ordered illustrations at the top and the bottom of a painting.

The "story painting" design has become immensely popular amongst painters as well as tourists, in particular Indian tourist. Among other things it has encouraged the painters to increase the number of illustrations and thereby the size of their paintings. However, even the largest of the

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[30] Although the Bengal scrolls and Orissan *patta* painting have a common style of depiction the traditions are distinct. Traditionally the Bengal painter or *patua* travels from village to village unwinding his painting while narrating the depicted story.

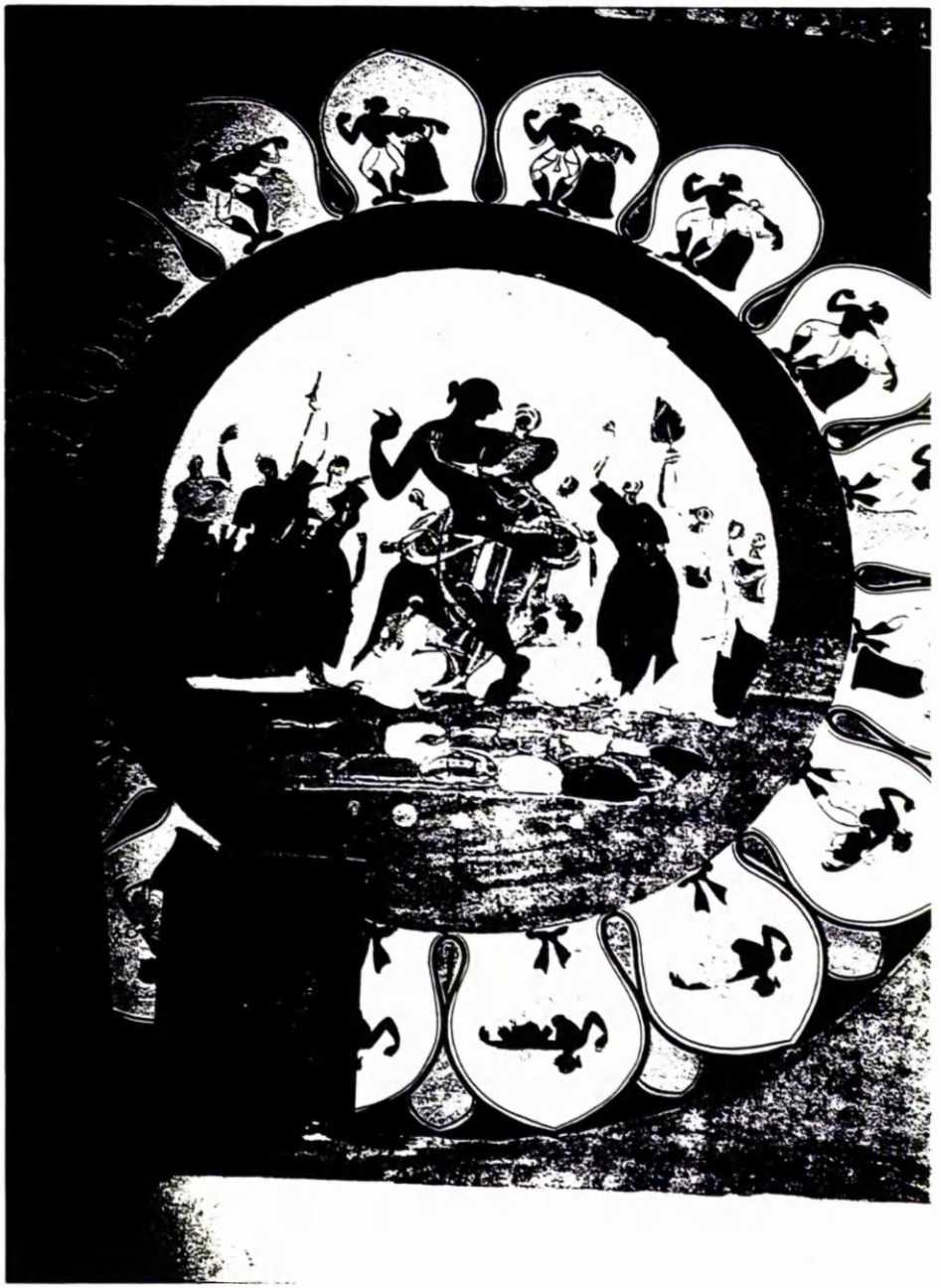
[31] Personal communication with Beatrix Hauser, Institute of Ethnology, University of Hamburg. As we shall see in illustration number 43 Orissan *patta* paintings also occasionally contain two temporal events within a single frame.

[32] For a discussion of the execution of the carvings of the Sanchi monuments see Dehejia (1972:117-134). For a more popular introduction to the subject matter of the carvings, see Mitra (1992).

[33] Personal communication with Das, Bhubaneshwar February 1994.

contemporary paintings are relatively small when compared to some of the paintings made in the last part of the 19th century[34].

Figure 36: ***Krishna Rāsa*** (*Krishna* enjoying himself with the *gopis*).



[34] An example is the *patta* at the National Museum of Copenhagen, Denmark, which measures 78" x 156" (Sjørslev and Speroni 1985:60).

Artist/s: Māguni Mahāpātra (I.2.2.1.), Raghurājpur, 1992.

Motif: Only the colouring of figures (*banaka*[35]) has been completed. The central motif depicts *Krishna* and *Rādhā* in a close embrace surrounded by *gopis*. This motif is surrounded by illustrations of *Krishna* and *Rādhā*. *Krishna*'s deeds are featured at the top and the bottom of the painting (visible only in Māguni's photograph apparent in the lower left corner of figure 36). This painting appears to be different stylistically but has simply not been completed. It is only after the application of lines (*saru kalā*) that figures take their characteristic form.

Material and size: *Patti*, 36" x 48".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, blue, and green.

Figure 37: *Rādhākrisna Jugala* (*Rādhākrisna* duo)

Artist/s: Baraju Mahāranā (N.1.), Dānda Sāhi, 1992.

Motif: This is another very popular motif depicting *Rādhā* and *Krishna* in a close embrace standing on a lotus and surrounded by two *gopis*. The circle around the centre is divided in sixteen rooms depicting either *Krishna* or *Rādhā*. The story of *Krishna* is illustrated in the lotus leaves (outer circle). The first illustration shows *Visnu* and *Lakshmi* resting on the eternal snake [*Ananta sayana*], followed by the imprisonment of *Debaki* and *Basudeba* [*Bandi sāla*] guarded by *Ugrasena*[36]. The third illustration shows *Krishna* killing the demon *Putanā* by suckling her to death [*Putanā badha*] and in the fourth the demon *Truna-asura* carries *Krishna* off, but

[35] *Banaka* is the fourth step in the process of making a *patta*, briefly described in chapter 4. The process has been described in depth by Dr. Pathy (1990:73-77).

[36] Each description of an illustration is followed by the term most commonly used by the painters when referring to that particular illustration. [To avoid confusion the term is kept in square brackets].

Krishna finally kills him [*Truna-asura badha*]. In the following six illustrations *Krishna* kills the crane demon [*bakāsura badha*], the crocodile demon [*arghāsura badha*], the bull demon [*sandha-asura badha*], and the bullock cart demon [*sakata-asura badha*]. In figure 9 *Krishna* uproots the Arjuna twin trees [*jāmalā Arjuna*], he then proceeds to kill the horse demon [*Kesi badha*] and - in an infraction of the linear unfolding of the narrative - ends in his mothers lap [*Jasodhā kole Krushna*][37]. Figure 12 depicts *Krishna* lifting the mountain Gobardhana [*giri gobardhana*], followed by *Krishna* stealing the clothes of the *gopis* [*bastra harana*]. *Krishna* then kills the serpent *Kāliya* [*Kāliya dalana*] and watches his mother making butter [*dadhi manthana*] and finally herds cows.

Figure 37: *Rādhākrisna Jugala*

[37] Most of the painters considered such infractions of the temporal progression wrong.

Material and size: *Patti*, 24" x 24".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, green, and blue.

Borders:

a) bent fly (*banka māchhi*)

b) wavy (*lahara*)

c) wavy (*lahara*)

d) round stem (*demphi golei*)

e) *kāngulā*.

Decoration of background: Flowers (*phula*), leaves (*patra*), design of five petals (*pāncha anguliā topi*), and clusters of dots (*punji*). The circles behind the leaves are referred to with the general term "intricate work" (*kārukārjya*).

Figure 38: Segment of *Bharatankara bheta* ([*Rāma's*] meeting with *Bharata*).

Artist/s: Binod Mahāranā (G.) (Instructor in palm leaf engraving at the Training Centre), Bhubaneshwar, 1992.

Motif: The painting illustrates *Bharata's* arrival in the forest after *Rāma* has been banished from the kingdom of their father, King *Dasaratha*. Compared to the dominant style of painting amongst painters of Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi, the style Binod has developed is characterised by an elongated and slim depiction of figures. Binod's current (early 1990s) style of painting is heavily influenced by his previous work with the wall paintings (figure 38b) which decorate the temple of *Viranchinarayana* in Buguda (see chapter 6, p. 368 for a discussion of the work). The painting has not been signed although Binod was prepared to do so if the person who purchased it had wished so[38].

38 At the Crafts Museum in Delhi where Binod sold the painting he explained that he does not normally sign *pattas* because it is not the tradition.

Figure 38: Segment of *Bharatankara bheta*

Figure 38a: Segment of *Bharatankara bheta*

Material and size: *Patti*, 32.5" x 44".

Colours: Black, white, various shades of red, various shades of yellow, dark and light blue, dark and light green, reddish brown, brown, and grey.

Decoration of background: Trees and leaves (*gacchapatra*) and various animals and figures.

Figure 38b: *Rāma's* meeting with *Bharata*, segment of the wall paintings in the *Viranchinarayana* temple in Buguda.

Figure 39: *Rāma, Rābana* judha (The fight between *Rāma* and *Rābana*).

Artist/s: Tulu Mahāranā (grandson of Ananta Mahāranā [E.1.2.]), Dānda Sāhi, 1992.

Motif: The central motif illustrates *Rāma's* fight with *Rābana*. *Rāma* and his charioteer *Mātali* drive towards *Rābana* followed by *Bibhishana* and *Lakshmana*. *Rābana* attacks in his flying chariot called *puspaka bimāna*. *Jāmbaban* is depicted behind the horses and *Nala*, *Angada*, *Susena*, and *Hanumān* are amongst the monkeys fighting the demons (*asuras*).

The central motif is framed by a simple circular border called round (*golei*). The illustrations begin at the top, left hand corner. The story is introduced with a depiction of *Visnu* and *Lakshmi* resting on the eternal snake *Bāsuki* [*Ananta sayana*]. The next illustration shows the seer (*rishi*) *Rishyashringa*

summoned to preside over a sacrificial rite (*jagyna*) performed by King *Dasaratha* who wishes to have sons [*Rusyasrunganku ānuchanti*]. The *rishi* is depicted with two prostitutes (*besyās*). The *rishi* presides over the *jagyna* attended by *Dasaratha* and his queens (*rānis*) [*jagyna*]. The fourth illustration shows the birth of *Rāma* [*Rāma janma*] followed by a name giving ceremony (*nāma karana*).

As the boys grow up *Bishvāmitra* teaches *Rāma* and *Lakshmana* the art of using a bow [*dhanubidyā sikhyā*]. One day *Bishvāmitra* comes to the palace to ask permission to take *Rāma* with him [*Bishvamitra bheta*]. Figure 18 shows *Rāma* killing *Tādakā* (*Tādakābadha*). *Rāma* and *Lakshmana* then have to cross the river by boat [*naukā pāri*]. The next illustration shows the marriage of *Sītā* [*Sītā bibāha* or *svayambara*] which takes place on a chequered marble floor, followed by their meeting with axe-*Rāma* [*Parsurāma bheta*]. Before they take leave *Kausalya* and her servant bless *Rāma*, *Lakshmana*, and *Sītā* while circumambulating fire (*Bandāpanā*).

The next illustration shows *Rāma*, *Lakshmana* and *Sītā* in the forest [*Banabāsa*] followed by the arrival of *Bharata* who comes to the forest to beg *Rāma* to return to his kingdom [*Bharatanka bheta*]. Later *Lakshmana* cuts off the nose of *Supanakhā* [*Supanakhā*] ultimately resulting in *Rābana*'s stealing of *Sītā* [*Sītā chori*]. In the 17th illustration *Rāma* and *Lakshmana* make friends with the dying eagle *Jatayu* [*Jatayra sambāda*] and later meet *Hanumān* [*Hanumāna saha bheta*]. It is *Hanumān* who builds the bridge to Lanka [*setu bandha*]. The last illustration shows *Angada's* meeting with *Rābana* [*Rābana Angada bheta*].

Material and size: *Patti*, 24" x 42".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, green, blue, brown, grey, and reddish brown.

Borders:

a) curved fly (*banka māchhi*),

b) dots (*topis*),

c) wavy (*lahara*).

Decoration of background: Flowers (*phula*), arrows (*shara*), monkeys, and demons.

Figure 40: ***Rāma Abhiseka*** (*Rāma's* consecration).

Artist/s: Mamatā Behera (O.), Raghurājpur, 1992.

Motif: The central motif, framed by two pillars and a ceiling, depicts the consecration of *Rāma*. This illustration of the central theme is simple when compared to the elaborate earlier version (figure 40a). From the left stand first the monkey *Sugriba* (younger brother of the monkey king *Bāli*) holding a whisk (*chanara*), second *Bibhisana* holding another kind of fan (*ālata*), third the bear *Jāmbaban* and fourth, on *Rāma's* right, the sage *Bishvāmitra*. On *Sītā's* left stands first *Lakshmana* holding a ritual umbrella (*chhati*), followed by *Bharata* holding a fan (*ālata*), *Shatrughna* holding a whisk (*chanara*), and last, the minister of King *Dasaratha*, *Sumanta*. *Hanumān* kneels in front of *Rāma* and two fairies (*parī*) float below the drape hanging from the ceiling.

At each side of the central motif five of the ten avatars are depicted. The first one is the fish avatar (*matsya avatāra*) at the bottom of the left column, followed by the tortoise (*kachhapa*) avatar, the boar (*Barāha*) avatar, the Man-lion (*Nrusingha*) avatar, and the dwarf (*Bāmana*) avatar. The right column runs from top to bottom beginning with axe-*Rāma* (*Parasurāma*), *Rāma* avatar, *Balarāma* avatar, *Buddha* avatar[39], and *Kalki* avatar. Two borders divide this part of the painting from the outer circle of illustrations. The designs of the borders are called swan (*hansa*) and square (*chauka*).

The illustrations, known as "rooms" or "houses" (*ghara*) among the painters, are read clockwise from the top left corner and show instances from *Rāma's* life[40]. The first motif illustrates the three wives of King *Dasaratha* after they have given birth to *Rāma*, *Bharata* and the twins *Lakshmana* and *Shatrughna*, [*Rāma janma*]. The next image illustrates how the sage *Bishvāmitra* comes to ask king *Dasaratha* to let *Rāma* accompany the sage in order to destroy some demons (*rakhyasas*) [*Bishvāmitra*]. *Rāma* and his

[39] Reliefs depicting the *Buddha* rather than the *Jagannātha* avatar have recently been revealed in the main sanctuary of the *Jagannātha* temple (Starza-Majewski 1993b:49).

[40] Occasionally the first illustration begins in the centre of the top row of illustrations.

brother *Lakshmana* follow the saint and *Rāma* kills the demon (*rakshyasi*) *Tādakā* [*Tādakābadha*]. Later, in the presence of *Lakshmana* and *Bishvāmitra*, *Rāma* emancipates *Ahalyā* who has been cursed by her husband *Gautama* when he came to know of her adultery with *Indra* [*Ahalyā udhāra*]. She is depicted sitting on stones which her husband had cursed her to become (figure 14)[41]. *Guha*, the chieftain of hunters, provides *Rāma* and *Lakshmana* with a boat to cross the river Ganges (*Gangā*), [*naukā pāri*], (*Bishvāmitra* is depicted standing behind *Lakshmana*).

The next - incomplete - illustration shows the marriage of *Rāma* and *Sītā* [*Sītā bibāha*], followed by their return to Ayodhya[42]. Some time after leaving Mithila, *Rāma* meets *Parsurāma*, who grants *Rāma* his penance (*tapas*) and accepts his defeat [*Parsurāma bheta*]. Meanwhile *Kaikeyi*, the mother of *Bharata*, begs a boon from her husband *Dasaratha* [*Kaikeyinka Barabhikshayā*], which ultimately results in *Rāmas's* exile from his father's kingdom.

In the forest *Rāma*, *Lakshmana* and *Sītā* meet the great sage (*rishi*) *Bharadvāja* who invites them to stay in his ashram, but *Rāma* decides they must continue their journey [*Bharadvājanka saha bheta*]. When *Supanakhā* (the sister of *Rābana*) bothers *Rāma* and *Sītā* in the forest, *Lakshmana* cuts off *Supanakhā's* nose, while *Rāma* and *Sītā* stand by [*Supanakhā*]. Later fancying the skin of a beautiful deer, *Sītā* begs *Rāma* to hunt the golden deer, depicted with two heads to illustrate illusion (*māyā*) [*Māyā mruga*]. While *Sītā* is alone *Rābana* comes to Panchabati to take her away [*Sītā chori*[43]].

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[41] This is an example of an image containing two temporal scenes.

[42] The exchange of garlands indicate the unification of marriage (see illustration number 40e). *Sītā* reaches towards *Rāma* but the garland has not yet been painted (illustration number 6 from the right).

[43] i.e., "the theft of Sita", in Hindi known as *Sītā harana*.

The eagle *Jatayu*, dying after a battle with *Rābana*, informs *Rāma* and *Lakshmana* about *Sītā* [*Jatayuthu sambāda*]. In the presence of *Lakshmana* and *Hanumān*, *Rāma* makes friends with the monkey *Sugriba* [*Sugriba saha mitratā*] and later kills his brother the monkey king *Bāli* [*Bāli baddha*]. In figure 16 *Hanumān* goes to look for *Sītā* [*Hanumānanku pathaile*]. On his way to Lanka, a demon (*rakshyasi*) called *Simhikā* tries to eat up *Hanumān*, who fights and kills her [*Simhikā rākshyasi*]. He manages to arrive safely in Lanka where he meets *Sītā* [*Sītā thāba*]. Motif number 19 illustrates *Hanumān* setting fire to Lanka [*Lankā podi*]. This is followed by *Bibhishana's* surrender to *Rāma*, while *Lakshmana* watches [*Bibhishana sarana*].

The next event illustrates the building of the bridge and the monkeys bringing *Rāma* and *Lakshmana* to Lanka [*Setubandha nirmāna*]. *Rāma* then sends the monkey *Angada* as a messenger to *Rābana* at Lanka [*Angada Rābana bheta*]. *Bibhishana* explains to *Rāma* who *Khumbhakarna* is and *Rāma* kills him. *Lakshmana* fights with *Indrajit* [*Indrajit Lakshmana juddha*], followed by an illustration of *Rāma's* fight with *Rābana* [*Rāma Rābana juddha*]. The last illustration shows *Sītā* undertaking a fire test [*Sītānka agni parikshyā*].

Material and size: *Patti*, 36" x 24".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, green, blue, grey.

Borders:
a) round stem (*demphi golei*),
b) square (*chauka*).

Decoration of background: Flowers (*phula*).

The illustrations depict themes which were also very popular in the 19th century. Woodcuts were, as indicated, one of the means by which images

were mass produced in Calcutta in the late 19th century. Figure 30a is an example of a woodcut depicting the consecration of *Rāma*.

Figure 40a: ***Rāma Abhiseka***, coloured woodcut, 9.5" x 13.5" (reproduced in Paul, plate 43 [1983:61]). This woodcut does not have related surrounding depictions but compared to the central motif of the previous illustration of *Rāma's* consecration this one is more complex. It is not only *Rāma*, his followers and the monkey army which have been depicted but also commoners: an old man and a beggar at the stairs leading to the throne.

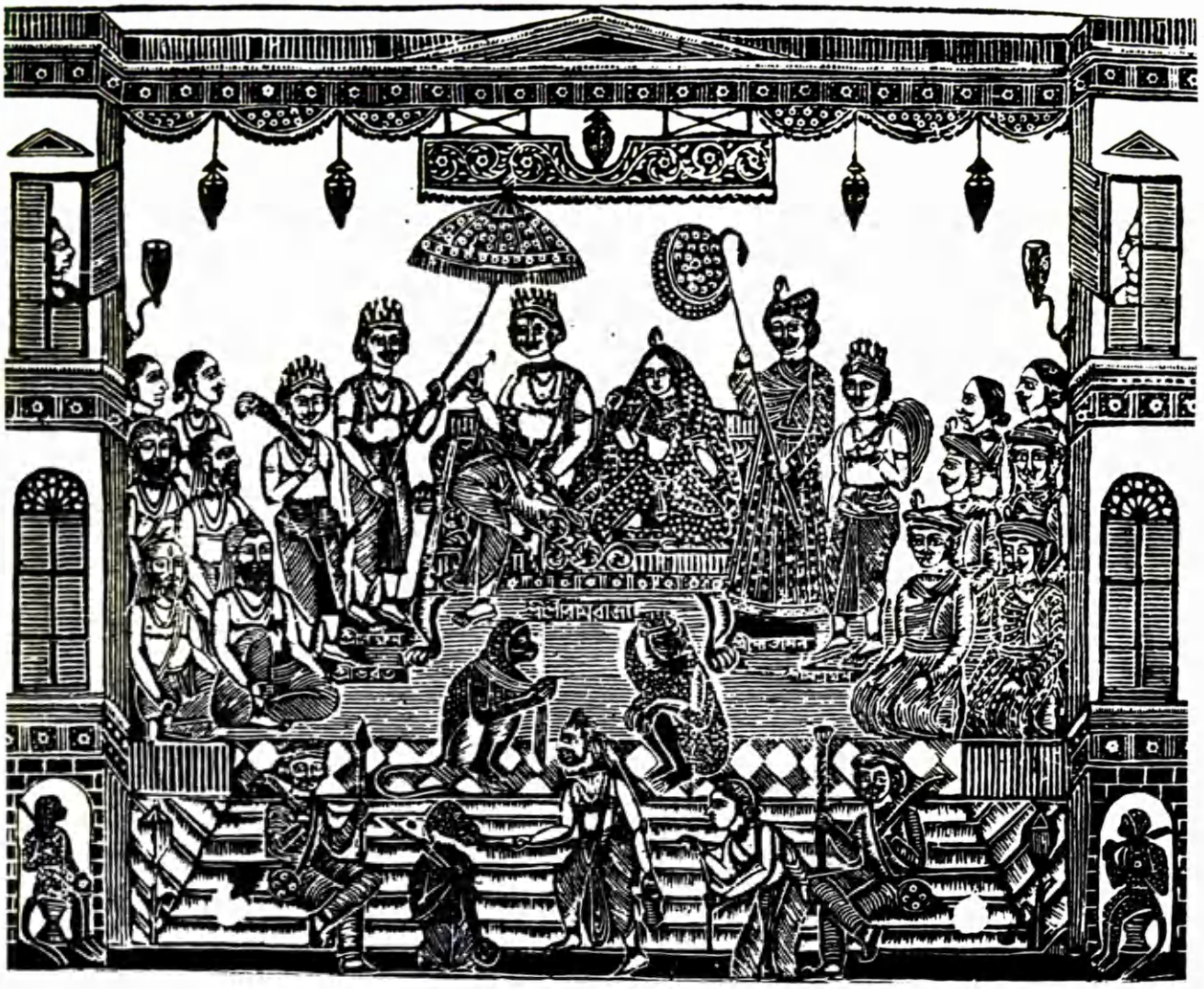


Figure 40b: ***Rāma Abhiseka***, chromolithograph by J.B. Khanna & Co.

Figure 40c: The ten avatars, early Bengali metal plate reproduction on paper (9.3" x 14.4"). By courtesy of the Wellcome Institute, London, video disk number: 45619. The depiction of the 9th avatar should be noted: rather than *Buddha* the carver has chosen to illustrate the *Jagannātha* triad. This shows that not only Orissan artists have been influenced by visual representations from Calcutta; Calcutta's artists have obviously been influenced by the city's proximity to the sacred town of Puri.

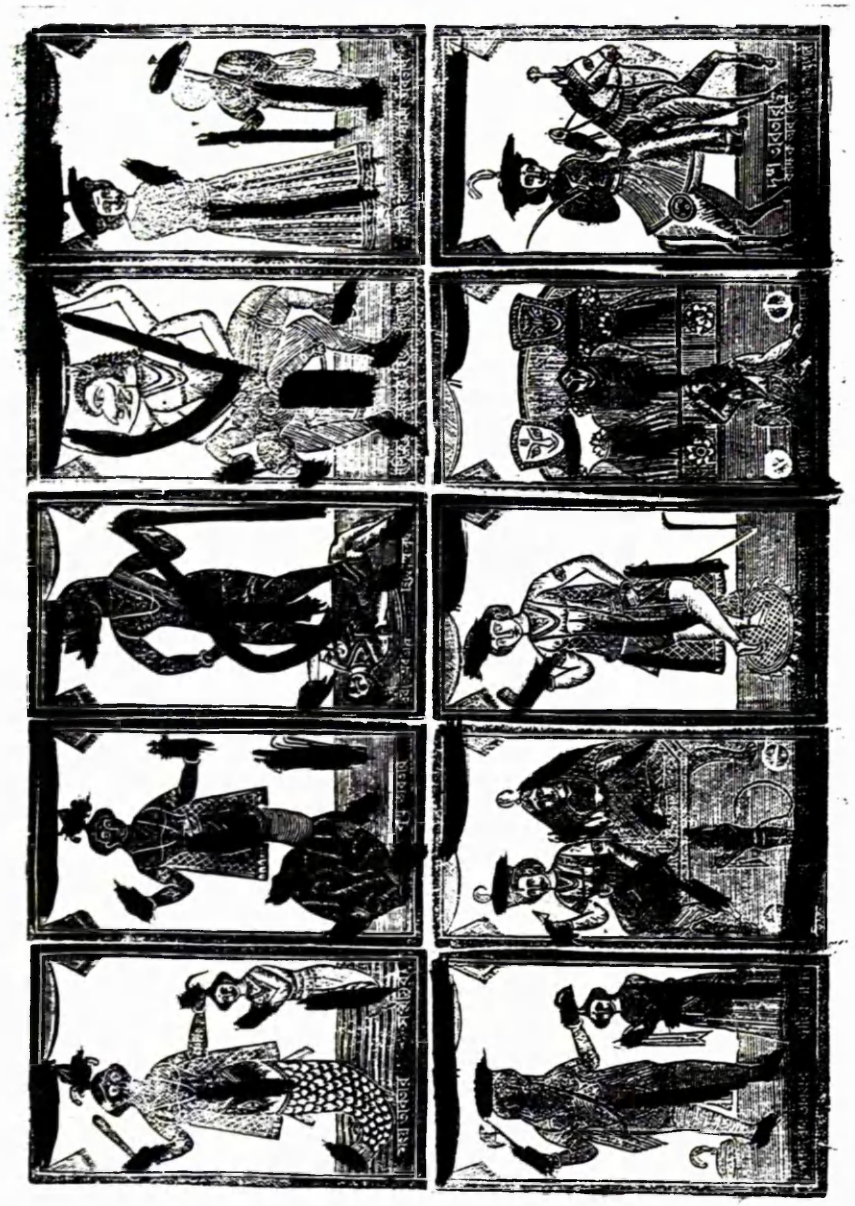


Figure 40d: The ten avatars, chromolithograph by J.B. Khanna & Co. This illustration is a typical example of a contemporary representation of the ten avatars. *Buddha* is here represented by *Krishna*.

Figure 40e: The marriage of Sītā and Rāma, chromolithograph by J.B. Khanna & Co.

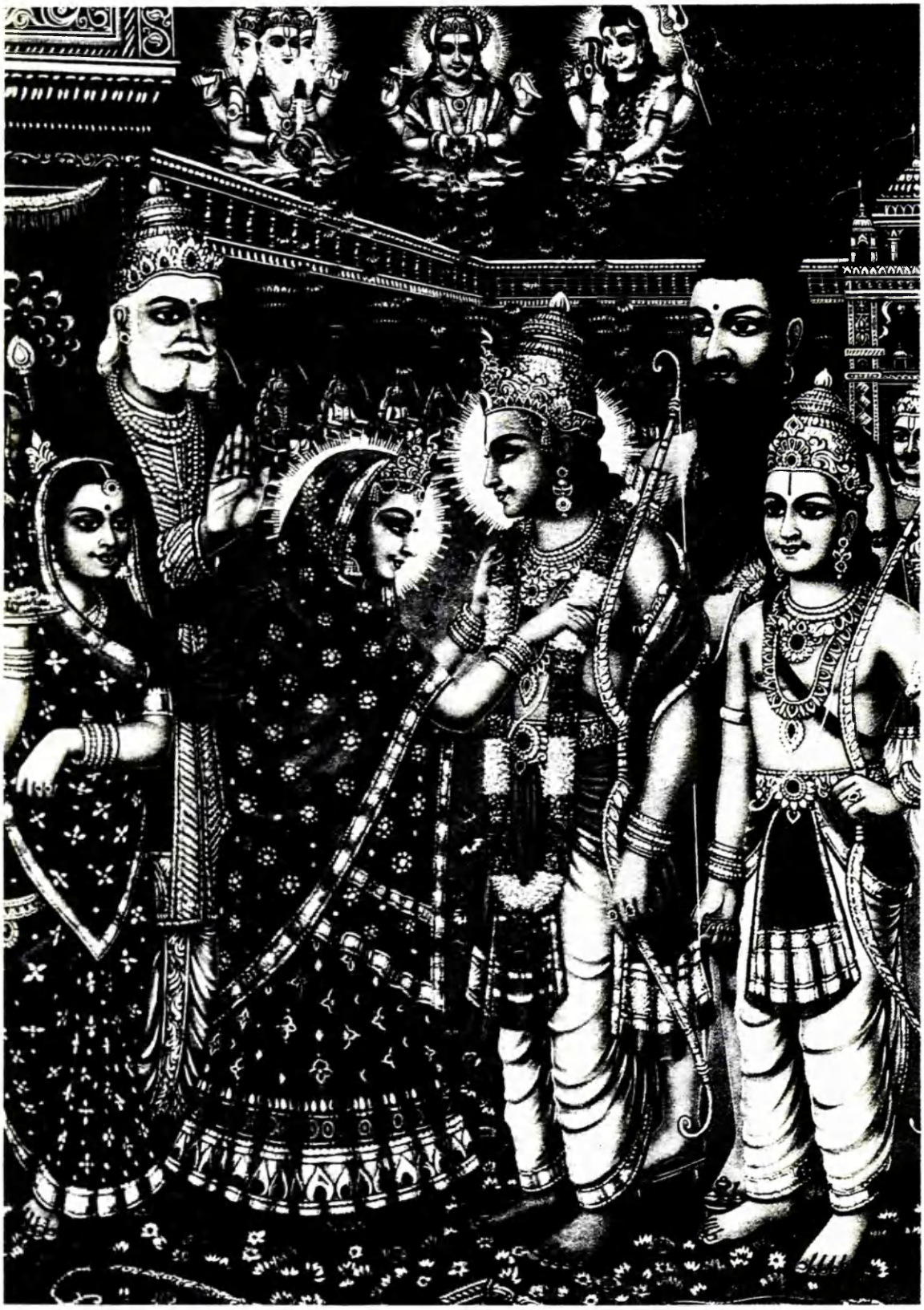


Figure 41: ***Rāma Abhiseka*** (*Rāma's* consecration).

Artist/s: Biranchi (M.) and his younger brother Papu Das, Dānda Sāhi, 1992.

Motif: I will not go through the various illustrations of this painting some of which have been mentioned above. The painting depicts *Rāma's* consecration as well as the war with *Rābana*. The size of the painting, the number of illustrations, and their forms are striking. Some houses are square

(*chauka*), some are betel shaped (*pānapatri*), and others again are octagonal (no local term). The black and white chequered floor is very popular amongst the painters to the despair of some of the local art specialists who classify these floors as non-Oriya (see chapter 6, page 379).

Material and size: *Tassar*, 48" x 72".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, green, and blue.

Borders:

a) elephant (*hāti*),
b) square (*chauka*),
c) snake (*sāpa*),
d) round (*golei*),
e) square (*chauka*),
f) wavy (*lahara*),
g) flower (*phula dāla*).

Decoration of background: Flowers (*phula*), designs of five petals (*pāncha anguliā topi*), clustered dots (*punji*), and a chequered pattern the painters call *mosaic* using the English term.

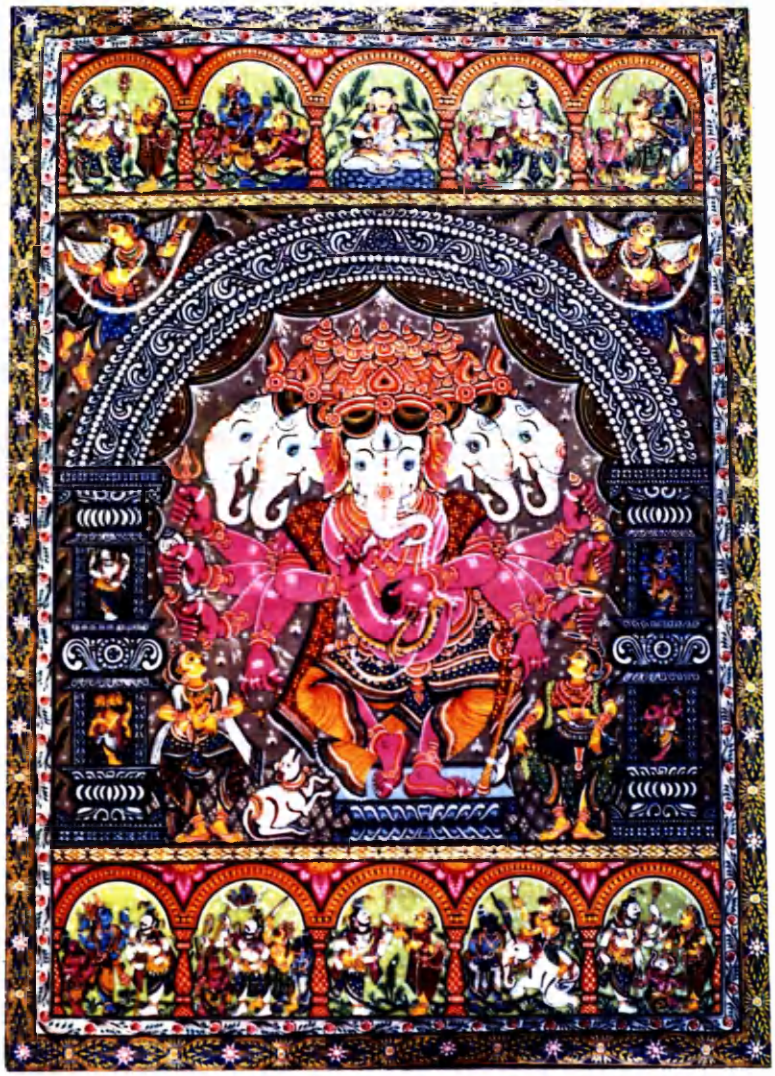
Figure 42: *Pāncha mukha Ganesh* (five headed *Ganesh*[44]).

Artist/s: Niranjana Mahāranā (E.1.1.1.) (son of Nrusingha Mahāranā), Dānda Sāhi, 1992.

Motif: *Ganesh* in his five headed form is placed on a jewel throne with a female companion (*sakhi*) on each side and his vehicle, the rat (*musā*), at his feet. He has ten arms, the five right ones hold: a bell (*ghanti*), a stick (*jasti*), a drum (*dambaru*), an axe (*pharsa*), and a sweet (*ladu*) and the left

[44] Popular prints depict *Pāncha mukha Hanumān* rather than *Ganesh*, see illustration number 42b.

Figure 42: ***Pāncha mukha Ganesh***



ones hold: a trident (*trisula*), a conch (*sankha*), an elephant goad (*ankusa*), a rosary (*japa*), and a tooth (*danta*). An arch (*khilāna*) placed on two pillars frames *Ganesh*. The upper part of the left pillar depicts *Siva* and the lower part *Brahmā*. The upper part of the right pillar depicts *Visnu* and the lower part depict the *rishi Nārada*. A fairy (*parī*) floats on each side of the arch.

The creation of *Ganesh* is illustrated at the top and the bottom of the painting. Starting from the top left corner *Siva* drives *Pārvatī* out. She meditates on *Visnu* and meets the *rishi Nārada.* The third illustration shows *Pārvatī* creating *Ganesh* who later fights *Siva* when he comes to see *Pārvatī.* The fifth illustration shows *Ganesh* defeating *Nandi* and *Bhrungi* (in Puri commonly known as the defenders of *Siva*). In the left, bottom corner *Siva* meditates on *Visnu* and meets the saint *Nārada.* In the seventh illustration *Visnu* creates an illusion (*māyā*)to divert *Ganesh's* attention. This makes *Ganesh* turn around and thus provides *Siva* with an opportunity to cut of *Ganesh's* head. After this incident *Pārvatī* requests *Siva* to revive her son and *Siva* sends *Nandi* and *Bhrungi* to find a new head. The ninth illustration shows *Nandi* and *Bhrungi* cutting off the head of an elephant and in the tenth and last illustration *Siva, Pārvatī* and *Ganesh* have been united. For a popular version of this motif see figure 42a.

Material and size: *Tassar*, 24" x 36".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, blue, green, brown, and grey.

Borders:

a) a design known as *chanda,*

b) wavy (*lahara*)

Background decoration: Clusters of dots (*punji*) and trees and leaves (*gachhapatra*).

Figure 42a: ***Siva*, *Pārvatī*, and *Ganesh***, chromolithograph by J.B. Khanna & Co.

Figure 42b: ***Hanumān*** in his five headed form, chromolithograph by J.B. Khanna & Co.

Figure 43: ***Nabagunjara*** (*Visnu* in the form of a composite animal[45]).

Artist/s: Arjunā Mahāranā (E.2.1.), Dānda Sāhi, 1991

Motif: *Nabagunjara* is a specific local visual form. The illustrations begin in the upper left corner and continue clockwise. The last illustrations are the three central ones. The motifs illustrate the following events in the *Mahābhārata*. *Judhisthira* wishes to make love with *Draupadi* (wife of the five Pandavas), *Arjunā* therefore guards the house. However, *Agni* comes in disguise and makes Arjunā swear to help him burn the Khāndaba forest. In the fourth illustration *Arjunā* interrupts his brother when he is with *Draupadi*, asking for permission to leave. As a consequence of the interruption Arjunā has to stay in the forest for a year and *Judhisthira* sees him off. In the sixth illustration *Arjunā* has reached the Khāndaba forest where he meets *Agni* (figure 7). *Arjunā* then burns the forest and is blessed

[45] In the Oriya version of the *Mahābhārata* written by the sage Sāralā Dash, *Visnu* takes the form of *Nabagunjara*. This composite animal has the head of a cock, the neck of a peacock, the hump of a bull, a snake for a tail and the waist of a lion. It has legs of a tiger, a horse and an elephant and a human hand holding a lotus.

by *Agni* (figure 9). Not only *Arjunā* but also *Siva*, disguised as a person from the "sabara" tribe, wishes to hunt rhinoceros. *Siva* defeats *Arjunā*, kills the rhino and only then *Arjunā* realises that the tribal person is *Siva* himself. *Arjunā* kneels in respect while *Pārvatī* observes the scene. In figure 13 *Arjunā* sees the animal *Nabagunjara* and is about to shoot an arrow when he realises the animal is a form of *Visnu*[46]. *Nabagunjara*, the animal composed of parts from nine different animals, is the central motif and the final illustration shows *Arjunā* kneeling in front of *Visnu* in his original form.

Material and size: *Patti*, 60" x 36".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, blue, green, and grey.

Borders:

a) round stem (*demphi golei*),

b) snake (*sāpa*),

c) wavy (*lahara*) (the borders which separate the different illustrations).

Figure 44: ***Mathurā Bijaya/Akrura ratha*** (Victory over the Kingdom of Mathura or *Akrura's* chariot).

Artist: Dīnabandhu Mahāpātra (I.2.3.1.) (teacher in the Training Centre), Bhubaneshwar/Raghurajpur, 1992.

Motif: The central motif depicts the departure of *Balarāma* and *Rāma* to *Kansā's* kingdom Mathurā. Numerous cowherds, *gopis*, cows and calves try their best to stop *Krishna* from going. Their number is striking when compared to figure 15. I will not give a detailed explanation of the 88 illustrations which begin with *Visnu* and *Lakshmi* resting on the eternal snake [*Ananta sayana*] in the top left hand corner, run clockwise and

[46] An example of two temporal events depicted within one frame.

continue in the inner circle starting in the top left hand corner and end with the slaying of *Kansā* and the reinstallment of *Ugrasena* as king. This painting exemplifies the contemporary tendency to increase the number of illustrations.

Figure 44: Mathurā Bijaya/Akrura ratha

The "story paintings" often cause the painters difficulties because they cannot recall the large number of illustrations. Some keep notes while others use photographs as aide-memoirs. This is one of the main reasons for the popularity of photographs amongst the painters. Photographs are not only used when painting "story paintings" but also for less complex paintings. Bengali tourists, for example, frequently commission paintings on the basis of a painter's photo album. Figure 36 was an example of how a painter, after receiving such an order, closely follows the photograph to avoid possible complaints (see chapter 5, pp. 347-50, 355 for a discussion of painters' use of photographs).

Material and size: *Tassar*, 36" x 96" feet.

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, blue, green, reddish brown.

Figure 45: ***Mathurā Bijoya / Akrura ratha*** (victory over the Kingdom of Mathurā).

Artist/s: Bijoy Kumar Parida (H.) and his apprentice Arupānanda Bhoi.

Motif: The *gopis* try in vain to obstruct the departure of *Krishna* and *Balarāma* to the Kingdom of *Kansā*. The most striking quality in the painting is the use of perspective. The water has been made in the style of Bijoy's *guru* Gokul Bihari Patnaik (see figure 30). Bijoy has introduced realistic touches apparent in the crying boy (see figure 45a). In earlier *pattas* faces and legs, with a few exceptions, are drawn in silhouette but Bijoy has chosen to depict some of the faces in a frontal position.

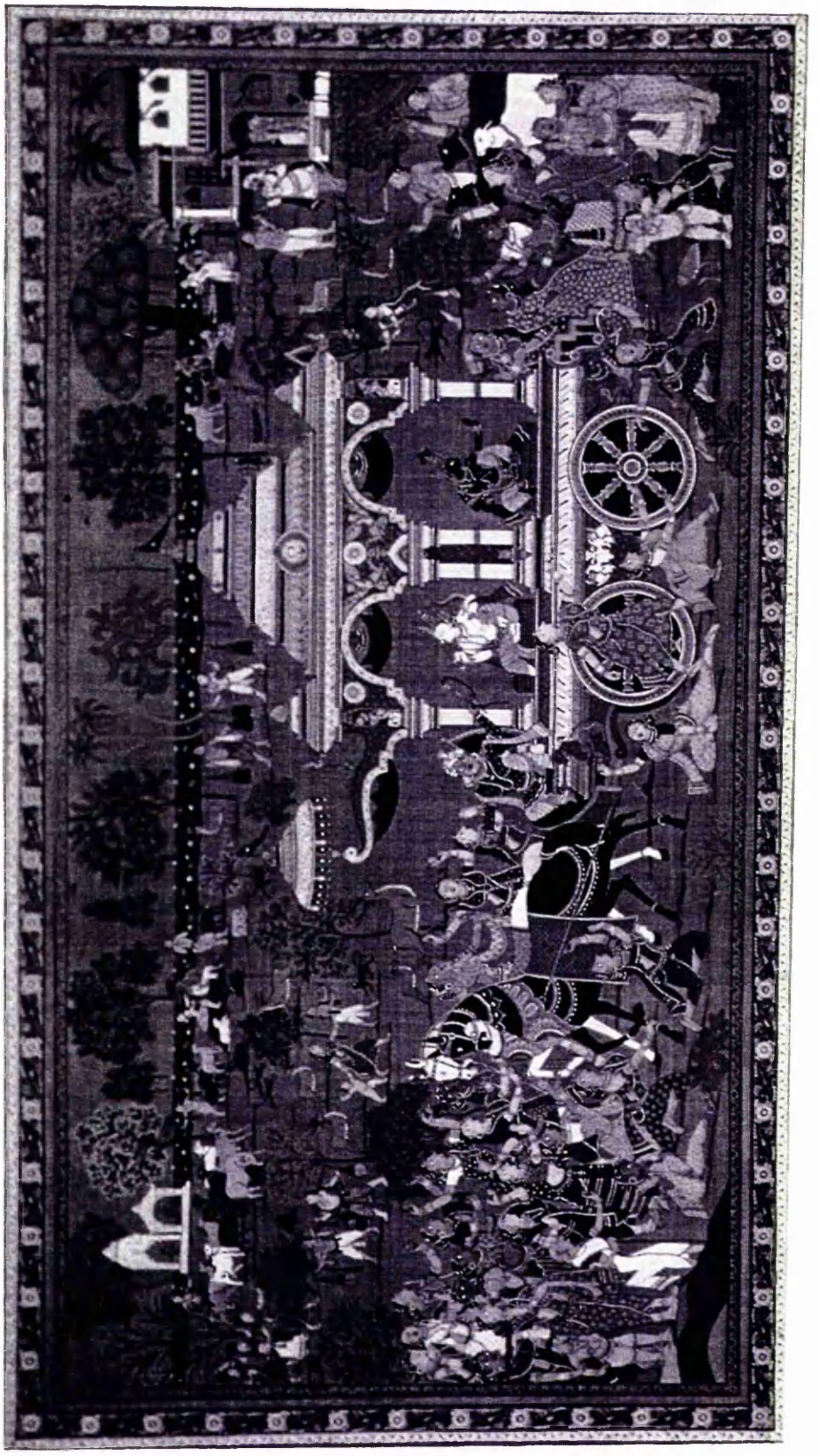
According to painters and art specialists perspective is one of the characteristics which mark a painting's deviation from the traditional *patta* style. In fact two *pattas* from the 19th century are made with perspective (reproduced in Starza-Majewski 1993b:55-56). Starza-Majewski suggests that one of the paintings (formerly in the Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin) was made some decades after the British conquest of Orissa (ibid.:53) and it is likely that the inclusion of perspective was inspired by western conventions[47].

The gap between the use of perspective in early and current *pattas* might explain the exclusion of perspective from art specialists' and painters' definitions of "traditional" *pattas*[48]. When art specialists link the identity

[47] Starza-Majewski must refer to the British conquest of the Marāthā sector of Orissa in 1803. After the fall of the Mughal Empire, part of Orissa remained under the Bengal Nawabs. This sector came under British rule in 1757 (Encyclopædia Britannica, 13:739).

[48] Starza-Majewski interprets the exclusion of perspective as a sign of regression: "Unfortunately, unable perhaps to rival the technical mastery of their predecessors in refined drawing many of the lesser later artists compensated for this by filling in the space with decorative motifs and using stronger colours. Their technique degenerated into a less elegant diagram often with a heavy priming" (1993b:54).

Figure 45: ***Mathurā Bijoya / Akrura ratha***



of traditional *pattas* with lack of perspective they ignore the existence of perspective in the early 19th century and push back the traditional notion of *pattas* a couple of centuries[49].

Material and size: *Tassar*, 48" x 84".

Colours: Black, white, shades of red, shades of yellow, dark and light blue, dark and light green, and reddish brown. According to Bijoy bright colours are not fashionable any more, customers prefer what he described as "*dull*" colours. He had therefore mixed a bit of reddish brown (*geru*) in the white colour to make it look like the soft, traditional colour white (*sankha*).

[49] Unlike painters, art specialists presumably have access to reproductions of the earlier *patta* paintings made with perspective.

Figure 45a: Segment of illustration 45.

Figure 46: ***Mahābhārata judha/Kurukshetra judha*** (The *Mahābhārata* war).

Artist/s: Gopāla Mahāranā (E.1.3.1.), Raghurājpur, 1994.

Motif: The central motif illustrates *Arjunā* and *Krishna* in the battlefield. The head of *Bhimā's* son *Belāsena* watches the battle from a pole. The chariot has only two wheels and differs from the traditional Orissan design which has four wheels and four pillars supporting the roof (see, for example, figure 45)[50]. The painting was inspired by a chromolithograph with a metallic sheen published by the Madras company, J.B. Khanna & Co. (see chapter 5, p. 351, 353 for a discussion of Gopāla's use of the chromolithograph as a source of inspiration).

Material and size: Tassar, 48" x 72".

Colours: Black, white, red, dark and light yellow, light blue, green, and grey.

[50] When Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.) from Raghurājpur saw the painting he commented that it was made in a modern (*adhunika*) style and that *patta* makers do not draw rickshaw-like chariots.

Figure 46: ***Mahābhārata judha/Kurukshetra judha***

Figure 46a: ***Mahābhārata*** **war**, chromolithograph published by J.B. Khanna & Co..

Most painters in the district of Puri found the glossy quality of this print (unfortunately this feature is lost in reproduction) very beautiful.

Figure 47: ***Sarasvatī.***

Artist/s: Ramesh Mahāranā (apprentice of Binod Mahāranā [G.]), Puri, 1994.

Motif: *Sarasvatī* (the goddess of wisdom and the patroness of arts and of music) is seated on a lotus throne (*padma singhāsana*) playing the *Binā*. In

her first, left hand she holds a palm leaf manuscript (*pothi*), and in her right hand an instrument with which palm leaves are engraved (*lekhana*). At her feet her *bahana*, the swan (*hansa*), floats on a pond. Two pillars support the arch from which drapes are hanging. *Sarasvatī* appears slim with elongated limbs in a style similar to that characteristic of figure 38 painted by Ramesh's *guru* Binod Mahāranā. Ramesh has signed the painting indicating that he considers it to be of high quality. Like the parallel calendar example (figure 47a) *Sarasvatī* is depicted with a halo and framed by pillars and an arch as if on a stage[51].

Material and size: *Tassar*, 46." x 36".

Colours: Black, white, dark and light red, dark and light yellow, dark and light blue.

Borders:

a) square design (*chauka*),

b) round stem (*demphi golei*),

c) square design (*chauka*).

Decoration of background: Designs of five petals (*pāncha anguliā topi*).

[51] Chris Pinney has shown how images mass-produced in Calcutta in the late 1870s must be seen in relation to popular theatre of the time (forthcoming).

Figure 47a: ***Sarasvatī***, chromolithograph by J.B. Khanna & Co.

In an attempt to create new designs the Handicraft Complex in Bhubaneshwar has developed illustrations of Orissan historical events. An example is King Ashoka's conversion to Buddhism, a motif which was occasionally used amongst painters of Puri district (1991-92).

Figure 48: Ashoka Kalinga (Ashoka's conquest of Kalinga).

Artist/s: X, Puri, 1992.

Motif: The *patta* is not complete. As in the former paintings the first illustration is the one in the top left hand corner and the rest follow clockwise ending with a consecration ceremony in the centre. The first motif illustrates the birth of Prince Ashoka, followed by an image in which he commences his studies and in the third illustration he learns to use weapons. Ashoka is later crowned, goes to war (figure 5) and fights in the Kalinga war. Figure 7 depicts an old woman asking Ashoka to grant her the life of her son. When Ashoka answers that it is beyond him she asks him how he can then send her son to war.

The next motif shows Ashoka taking the advice of the monk Upagupta. Ashoka reconsiders his deeds and decides to change. He embarks upon projects for the benefit of his people[52]. The illustrations show how he digs a well and later raises the Ashoka pillar, and a statue of *Buddha*. He proceeds to construct a plantation and a lodge (*dharmshālā*) for the benefit of travelling Buddhists and then sends his son and daughter to Sri Lanka to preach Buddhism[53].

Illustration number 14 shows Ashoka taking leave from his children and in 15 and 16 he preaches Buddhism. The next motif illustrates the passing over of the kingdom to his son followed by the death of Ashoka. The upper central motif depicts the consecration of his son seated on a jewel throne (*singhasana*). On his right are Buddhist supporters and on his left, countrymen. The lower central motif is an illustration of the Kalinga war.

It is striking how two of the motifs have been inspired from the illustrations commonly used in the *Rāmāyana* story paintings. The depiction of Ashoka learning to use weapons has a parallel in the much used illustration of how *Rāma* and his brothers as youngsters are taught this skill (see figure 39, the 6th illustration from the left) and the death of Ashoka is painted in a similar manner to the common illustration of the death of King *Dasaratha* (see figure 41, the 26nd illustration after *Ananta Sayana*). It is, moreover, worth noticing the use of perspective in the depiction of the lodge. According to X he made the clothes of the countrymen inspired by Rajasthani miniature paintings. This illustrates how painters refer to other visual fields as sources of inspiration.

Material and size: *Patti*, 36" x 48".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, green, blue, and grey.

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[52] Ashoka reigned from 269 B.C. to 232 B.C.(Basham 1988:53).

[53] The artist explained he had made a mistake in the painting interchanging illustration number 13 and 14 and thus breaking the linear unfolding of the narrative.

Borders:

a) the barely visible border surrounding the central motif is a new design and does not have a name.

b) flowers (*phula*),

c) wavy (*lahara*) (the borders separating the illustrations).

King Ashoka's conversion to Buddhism is one of the themes illustrated on the *tassar* wall hangings (painted in the style of *patta* painting) prevalent in the foyer of one of the big hotels in Bhubaneshwar. According to the then Managing Director, Mr. J.K. Mohanty, of Hotel Swosty, the paintings were chosen for their "traditional and ethnic" qualities because tourists, when visiting Orissa, want to see images or items of Orissan origin. The same arguments lay behind the choices of interior design in May Fair in Puri, a hotel which opened in 1993 (personal communication with Resident Director Ravi Mahāpātra).

Like Swosty, the foyer of May Fair is dominated by *tassar* paintings painted in *patta* style. The difference between the paintings lies in the choice of motifs and the styles. The paintings in Swosty's foyer illustrate *Krishnaleelā* themes and King Ashoka's conversion made in the traditional style of *patta* painting. In a striking contrast the foyer of May Fair displays *tassar* paintings illustrating the *Jagannātha* triad and the car festival (*Ratha Jātrā*), the latter executed with perspective and realist touches. The owner of the hotel had, according to the Resident Director, ordered the painting of the car festival because he felt that this image would appeal to people irrespective of their religious background.

Figure 49: Ashoka (illustration of how Ashoka gave up his weapons and converted to Buddhism).

Artist/s: Bhāgabata Mahāranā (C.2.) arranged for several *patta* painters mainly from Bhubaneshwar to paint in the 1980s.

Figure 49: Ashoka

Motif: King Ashoka gives up his weapons and converts to Buddhism. On the king's right are four Buddhists, while four soldiers stand behind the king. Compared to the majority of paintings in Raghurājpur the background is sparsely decorated and the figures are slim and elongated.

Like the depictions of the triad in the *Jagannātha* temple and *Nabagunjara*, the images depicting Ashoka's conversion to Buddhism are specifically local visual forms. It is striking that the two latter illustrations never appear in the mass-produced repertoire.

Material: *Tassar*.

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, green, and grey.

Figure 50: ***Naba Graha*** (The nine planets).

Artist/s: Brajakishare Das, Puri, 1980s.

Motif: An illustration of the nine planets. The image in the top, left corner illustrates Venus (*Sukra*), followed by Mercury (*Budha*), and the moon (*Chandra*). The row below depicts Jupiter (*Bruhaspati*), the sun (*Rabi*), and Mars (*Mangala*). The three images at the bottom illustrate the descending node (*Ketu*), the ascending node (*Rāhu*), and Saturn (*Shani*).

As mentioned in chapter 1 Brajakishare got a state award for this painting in 1985. It was inspired by an old drawing on paper brought to the Handicraft Complex by Bhāgabatha Mahāranā (C.2) who had found it during one of the trips he had undertaken to search for inspiration to make new *patta* painting designs. It is possible that Bhāgabatha's "old drawing" was found on the back of an almanac (*pānji*) which often depicts similar designs.

Material and size: *Patti*, 24" x 36".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, blue, green, grey, and reddish brown.

Borders:

a) round stem (*demphi golei*),

b) snake (*sāpa*).

Figure 50: ***Naba Graha***

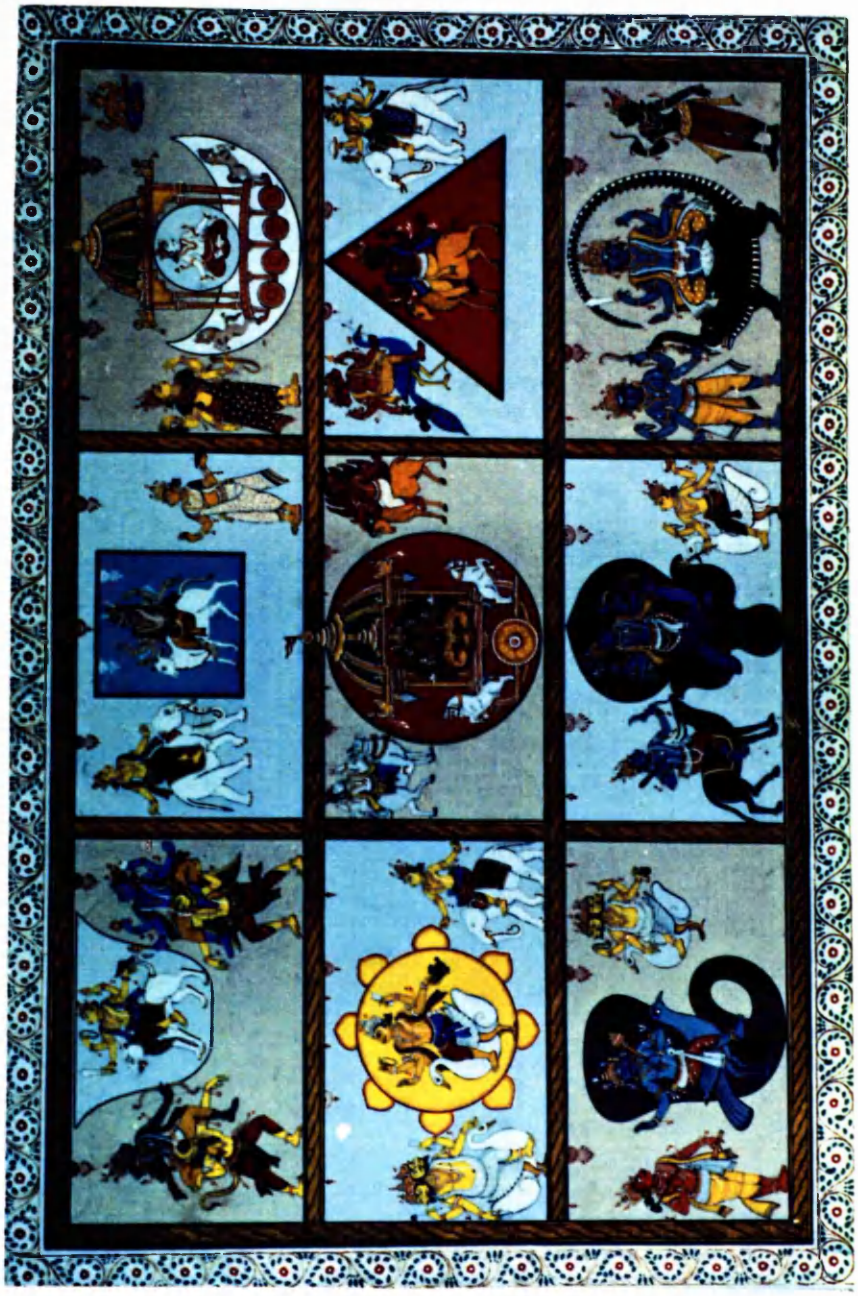
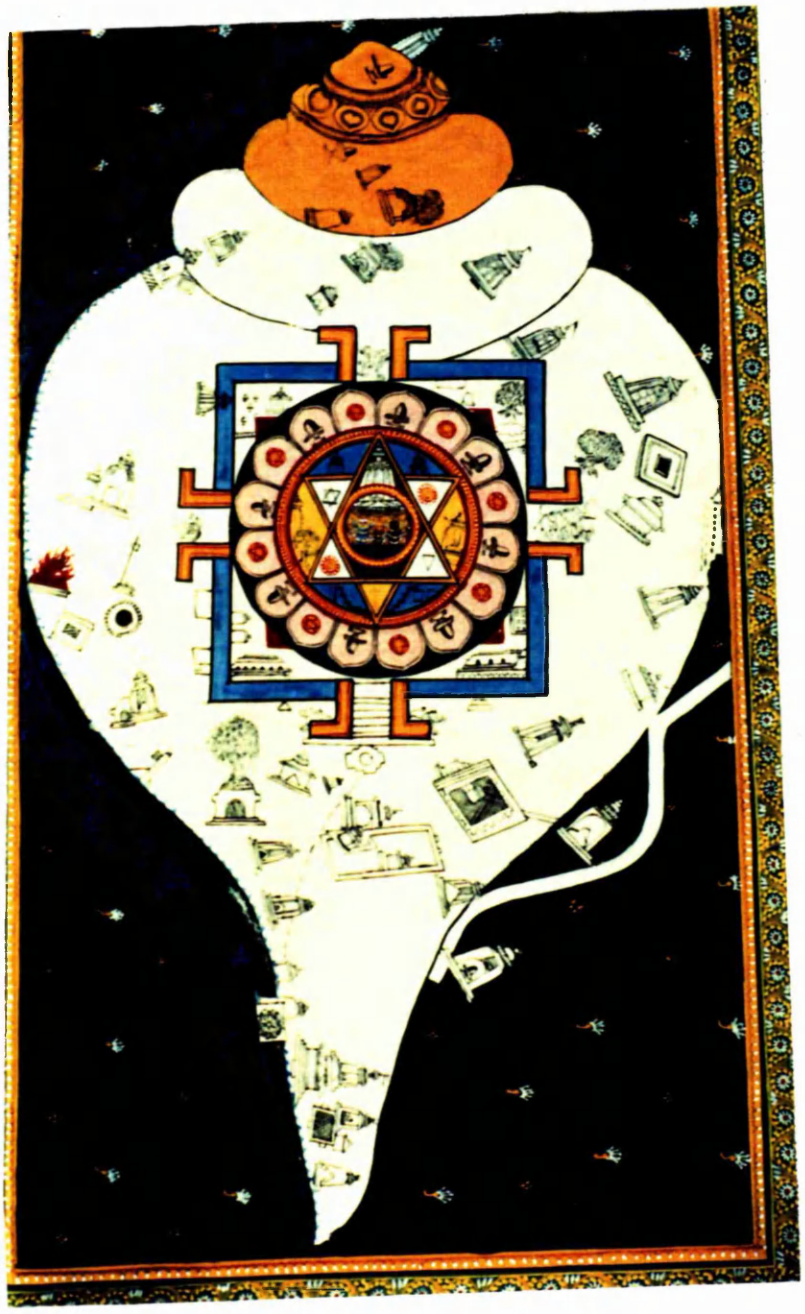


Figure 51: ***Sankha Kshyetra*** (a symbol of Puri)



Artist/s: Brajakishare Das, Puri, 1980s.

Motif: As mentioned in section I the conch-shell is an ancient symbol of Puri town. Among other things the image shows important places of worship. The *Jagannātha* triad is depicted in the temple in the centre of the painting. Various temples and ponds as well as the cremation ground are sketched around the temple. For a description of the various depictions, see Starza-Majewski's generalised, yet detailed, account of the *Sankha khsyetra* (1989:257-58).

Material and size: *Patti*, 24" x 18".

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, red, green, and blue.

Borders:

a) round stem (*demphi golei*),

b) *kāngulā*.

Figure 52: Village scene

Artist/s: Bikārī Mahāranā, employed as designer in *patta* painting at the Handicraft Complex.

Motif: An Oriya village. Two children are on their way to school, while women collect water at the pond rather than the tube well depicted behind the fence. To the left of the pond is an ancestral shrine and on the right of the pond a basil (*tulasī*) plant. What is most striking in the painting is the attempted perspective which is most obvious in the declining size of houses and the mountains depicted behind the first house. Cattle, by contrast, have been depicted without any attempt at perspective and the difference in size (the biggest is further away) indicates, according to the artist, a difference in age. The artist has also painted a discontinuous red background behind

the first house. (For Sarat Chandra Mohanty's [Deputy Mangager of the Handicraft Complex] comments on the paintings see chapter 6, pp. 365-66).

Figure 52: Village scene

Material and size: *Patti*, 48" x 60".

Colours: Black, white, light red, yellow, light blue, dark and light green, and (bluish) grey.

Borders:

a) square design (*chauka*),

b) fish (*matsya*).

Decoration of background: Clouds (*megha*) and grass (*ghāsa*).

Section III

Patā Paintings for Worship

Patās are painted on wooden plaques (occasionally covered with a single layer of cloth) for the purpose of worship. The paintings are brought by their owners to be repainted by *Chitrakāras* a few days before the yearly *pujā* of a given deity takes place[54]. The most important difference between these paintings and the ones made for tourist consumption is the depiction of the face and eyes of a deity. A *patā* will, without exception, depict a deity in a frontal position so that both eyes can be seen and *darsana* received[55].

In common with the paintings made for tourist consumption the execution of a *patā* depends not only on the skill of a painter but also on the payment. A customer who is prepared to pay what a painter demands is likely to get a *patā* of a finer quality than one who pays a minimum price.

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54 Sometimes a new *patā* is needed in which case the painter purchases a wooden plaque and then has to draw a sketch rather than just repaint an old motif.

55 For a discussion on the significance of visual exchanges between deities and their worshippers see Babb (1981) and Eck (1981).

Figure 53: *Nrusingha patā* made for worship on *Nrusingha janma* (the birthday of *Nrusingha*, *Baishākha sukla* 3).

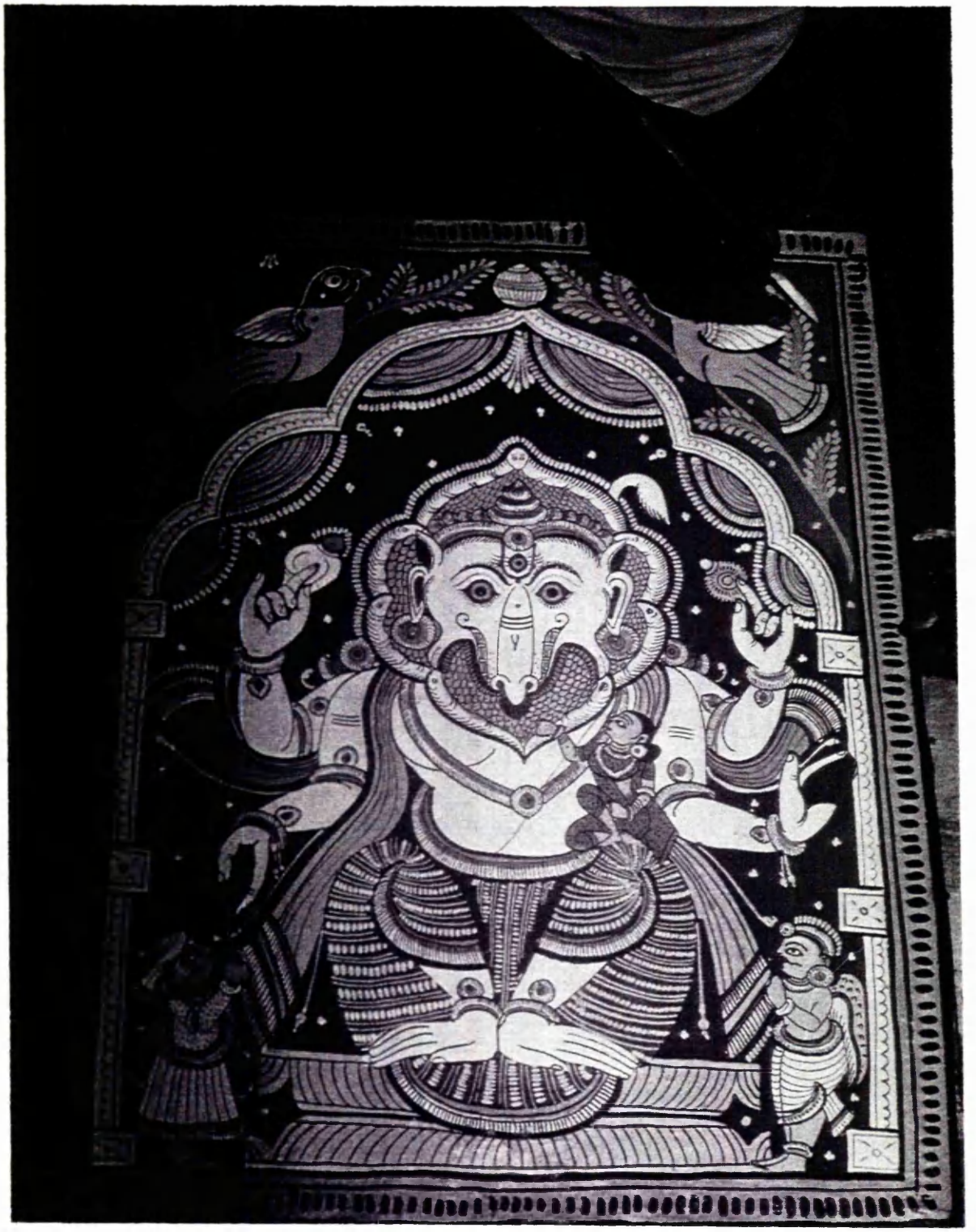

Figure 53a: ***Nrusingha patās***

Artist/s: Baraju Mahāranā (N.1.), Dānda Sāhi, 1992.

Motif: *Nrusingha* is depicted in frontal position and has his consort *Lakshmi* seated on his lap. His first, left hand removes fear (a gesture [*mudrā*] known as *abhaya*), and the second, left hand holds the conch (*sankha*). With his first, right hand *Nrusingha* indicates the *mudrā barada* and with his second, right hand he holds the wheel (*chakra*). Two parrots are depicted above the arch. Compared to the general mass of *patās* this example is characterised by its precise and fine execution.

Colours: Black, white, red, yellow, blue, and green. Like the paintings made for tourist consumption, the *patās* are made with powder water colours. In contrast to those produced for tourists, the *patās* must neither be painted with oil based colours nor lacquered, as these materials are considered impure (see chapter 4, p. 274).

Borders: (Elongated) dots (*topi*).

Decoration of background: Trees and leaves (*gachhapatra*).

Figure 54: A *Chitrakāra* from Puri and his children painting *patās* for *Nrusingha pujā.*

Unfortunately I do not have a close up of these *patās*. Like the majority of *patās* these were of a very rough execution. *Chitrakāras* often allow even the youngest of their children to participate in painting *patās* to finish the work as quickly as possible[56].

56 A painter will get between Rs. 5 and Rs. 15 for this quality of *patā*.

Figure 54: A *Chitrakāra* from Puri and his children painting *patās* for *Nrusingha pujā*.

Figure 55: Nārāyana Mahāranā's mother Padmavati paints *Nrusingha patās*

Figure 55a: *Durgā patās* made for worship during *Durgā pujā* (*Āshwina sukla* 7-10).

Artist/s: The mother and younger brother of Nārāyana Mahāranā (C.1.-s-i-l.), Puri.

A *Brahmin* has come to collect his *Durgā patā*. The painters are busy trying to complete the *patās* in time for the pujā. Like the *patās* illustrated above (figure 54) these *patās* were executed as quickly as possible. Only one *patā* was painted scrupulously by Nārāyana himself. A *Brahmin* had paid Rs. 80 to ensure that his *patā* would be painted with care (cf.273).

Conclusion

The depiction of voluptuous figures, a preference for naturalistic rather than geometrically stylised trees (figure 18), shading along outlines, and three-quarter and full facial views in *pattas* (figure 45) must be seen in relation to a massive invasion of western style and iconography which came to India during the Raj.

The western style apparent in the current *pattas* can often be traced directly to the influence of popular calendar art, most obvious in the introduction of halos (figures 34 and 47). Other influences include attempts at perspective (figures 45, 45a, 48, 52[57]) and shading along outlines (figure 30[58]).

The traditionalist discourse on *pattas* defines itself against this invasion of western style and iconography previously through woodcut prints and chromolithographs and currently through the medium of popular calendar art. The painters of Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi generally reject perspective and shade on the grounds that it is a foreign style which threatens the Orissan style of painting. However, several of these painters have no objection to the adoption of other, less obvious, western influenced elements

57 Figure 52 is made with attempted perspective but was, as discussed in chapter 6, the result of an order from the Handicraft Complex rather than inspired by calendar prints.

58 One of the *pattas* from the Zealey collection (acc. nb. N1977 As 4.10.) has likewise been painted with shading along the outlines.

such as halos. In Puri it is not uncommon to see examples of *pattas* painted with shading along outlines, and in Bhubaneshwar there are examples of painters who use perspective and shadow but are quite indifferent to the western origin of these qualities.

Not surprisingly, it is painters in the city, exposed to other styles and conventions of painting, who have been most receptive to the development of a new style of *patta* painting characterised by the use of perspective, the shading of outlines and naturalistic touches. Compared to the painters from the villages, those from the capital generally exhibit a more pragmatic attitude to the introduction of these unconventional elements requested by customers.

The penetration of western conventions has so far, generally, been confined to *pattas* which are not produced in a ritual idiom. In contrast to *pattas*, *patās* made for ritual use show no traces of western style and iconography. The production of paintings in religious contexts is the concern of the following chapter.

Chapter 4
The significance of
Painting for Religious Purposes

When painting for religious purposes, the appearance of a painting, i.e. the way it is executed, is just one of many considerations - and often the one considered the least significant. To have one's face lit by temple fire, to acquire merit or money or to ensure that the activity takes place at an appropriate moment are some of the issues considered of prime importance by the painters.

During a yearly cycle, the majority of *Chitrakāras* of the district of Puri are involved in painting work related to various religious activities. Table 1 shows the yearly cycle of festivals of relevance to the *Chitrakāras*. At some festivals work is done by *Chitrakāras* some of who are officially designated servants (*sebakas*)[1] of the *Jagannātha* temple and others who are appointed by temples or monasteries (*mathas*) in the district. At other festivals paintings are the central activity around which patron-client relations evolves.

This chapter is concerned with an example of *sebā* work for the *Jagannātha* temple, some examples of work embedded in patron-client relations and an example of work done entirely for the benefit of the painters themselves. The painters' relationship with the deities they give form to is also discussed.

1 Different orders (*nijoga*) are officially employed to do service (*sebā*) in the *Jagannātha* temple. The people doing the service are called *sebakas* or servants.

Table 5:

Yearly cycle of festivals of relevance to the *Chitrakāras* of Puri district

Oriya month and day of display[2]	**Subject and explanation**
Chaitra krusna 1	*Holi.*
Chaitra krusna 8	*Sahi jātrā* (local village festival).
Chaitra sukla 4	*Ashokā astamī.* Painting of *Siva*'s chariot, *Lingarāj* temple, Bhubaneshwar.
Baishākha sukla 3	*Chandan Jātrā.* Metal images of *Madana Mohana, Lakshmi* and *Sarasvatī* sail in boats (*chāpas*) on the Narendra tank in Puri. The walls of the temple (*Chāpaghara*) and the boats are painted.
Baishākha sukla 13*	*Nrusingha janma. Nrusingha* is painted in temples and in houses of *Brahmins.*
Jyestha sukla 5	*Siva* bibāha. One of *Siva*'s bulls known as *Brusabha* or *Nanda* is painted in *Siva* temples.
Jyestha sukla 6	*Sītalasasthi. Siva* and *Pārvatī* parade followed by the bull *Brusabha.*
Aṣādha krusna 1-15*	*Anasara patti* displayed in *Jagannātha* temples.
Aṣādha sukla 2	*Ratha Jātrā. Balabhadra, Subhadrā, and Jagannātha* travel through Puri in their newly made and freshly painted chariots.
Bhādraba krusna 5 *	*Rekhā pānchami. Ganesh* is painted in the doors of houses owned by *Brahmins.*
Bhādraba krusna 8 *	*Krishna janma. Patās* worshipped till *Purnimā* (*Āshwina sukla* 15)[3]
Bhādraba sukla 4	*Ganesh pujā. Patās* and clay figures (*māti murtīs*).
Āshwina krusna 4	*Vishvakarma pujā. Māti murtīs.*
Āshwina sukla 7-10*	*Durgā pujā. Patās* and *māti murtīs.*
Āshwina sukla 15	*Gājalakshmī. Patās* and *māti murtīs. Kurmāra Purnimā.*
Kārtika māsa	*Chaurā pujā.* Women worship the Tulasī plant placed on a column called *chaura.*
Kārtika krusna 14 *	*Divali. Kālī pujā. Patās* and *māti murtīs.*
Kārtika sukla 10 *	*Kārtikesvara pujā. Māti murtīs.*
Pusha (all sundays)	*Surya pujā.* Women fast and worship the sun.
Māgha sukla 5	*Basanta pānchami* (*Sarasvatī*). *Patās, māti murtīs* and painted coconuts.
Phālguna sukla 15	*Dola Uchhaba* (*Rādhākrishna patās*). With the exception of the village goddess, the deities of Raghurājpur are brought out to swing.

* These events are referred to in the chapter.

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2 In Orissa the *purinmanta* system is followed which means that the lunar month begins with the dark fortnight (*krusna pakhya*) and ends with a bright fortnight (*sukla pakhya*) and a full moon (*purnimā*). *Chaitra* is the first month of year and corresponds approximately to March-April. For a full explanation of the calendar system see Freed and Freed (1964) and Pugh (1983).

3 As mentioned in chapter 3 *patā* is a painting done on a wooden plaque for the purpose of worship.

Chitrakāra sebakas of the *Jagannātha* Temple

The *Chitrakāra* services (*sebās*) in the *Jagannātha* temple used to consist of three divisions (*bādas*), namely "*bada* (elder) *bāda*" or "*Balabhadra bāda*", "*majhi* (middle) *bāda*" or "*Subhadrā bāda*", and "*Jagannātha bāda*". Each division had one leader (*hākim*) who was an officially recognised *sebaka* of the *Jagannātha* temple. Due to the death of the *hākim* of *Subhadrā bāda*, the *hākim* of *Balabhadra bāda* took over that *sebā* and there are thus currently only two *Chitrakāra hākims*.

The position as *sebaka* is inherited but must always be acknowledged by the temple administrator. In cases where a *Chitrakāra* does not have a son he is likely to be followed by a nephew[4]. In the yearly ritual of *sādhibandhā* ("tying in marriage") a *Chitrakāras'* position as *sebaka* is officially sanctioned[5]. It is the responsibility of the *sebaka* to see that the *sebā* during the yearly ritual cycle is done either by himself or people from his *bāda* or *kula*, the lineage in its broadest form without a known ancestor. Only a *sebaka* and members of his *kutumba* are entitled to get their faces "lit" by fire (*mukha niān*) from the *Jagannātha* temple kitchen after their death, something which is considered a great honour.

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4 See Das for a description of different examples of *Chitrakāras'* applications for the position as *sebaka* (1982:31-35).

5 This paragraph is written on the basis of information acquired from officials in the Temple office, Puri, and Das (1982).

Pattas for Ritual Purposes: the Making of *Anasara Pattis*

This section is concerned with *sebakas*' attitude towards painting the three images which replace the *Jagannātha* triad figures (*murtīs*) during a period each year when they popularly are said to suffer from fever[6]. During this period (from *Asādha krusna* 1 till the new moon of *Āsādha* [*Āsādha sukla* 1]) the *murtīs* are not accessible to the public and *darsana*[7] can therefore only be received from the *anasara pattis*. My analysis shows that one of the *sebakas* and his relatives (all involved in the tourist and commercial industry[8]) make much more of the yearly event, when they have to paint the *anasara pattis*, than the *sebaka* who is economically dependent upon ritual work.

Amongst the *Chitrakāras* the making of *anasara pattis* is considered the most important of their *sebā* works. In 1991, Hātī Mahāranā (A.1.) was the *hākim* of the *Balabhadra* and *Subhadrā bāda* and, thus, was responsible for making *Balabhadra*'s and *Subhadra's anasara pattis*. He lived in Cuttack but came to stay with his brother Hari Mahāranā (A.2.) in Puri in order to participate in and supervise the painting of the *anasara pattis*. It is a big and expensive event for which the household has to save money every year. Food has to be provided for the members of the *Balabhadra bāda*[9] who

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6 *Balabhadra*, *Subhadrā* and *Jagannātha* fall ill the day after *Snāna purnīnā*, when they are brought out of the temple to have a ritual bath at the bathing platform (*Snāna Vedi*). For a discussion of the rituals of *Snāna purnimā* see Marglin (1985).

7 *Darsana* or seeing the divine in an image is crucial in Hindu worship. Contact between the devotee and the deity is exchanged through the eyes. For a discussion of *darsana* see Eck (1981) and Babb (1981).

8 They paint signboards for example or items for the Indian tourists coming to Puri, such as sea shells decorated with patterns or English sentences of which "I love you" is the most popular.

9 As indicated the *Subhadrā bāda* is extinct but painters from the *Jagannātha bāda* can participate if they like. If a *hākim* and his *kutumba* of either *Balabhadra* or *Jagannātha bāda* are in a state of pollution (*chhuān*) painters from the other *bāda* will take over.

come to give a hand painting and relatives who come to stay during the weeks before the famous car festival (*ratha jātrā*) (*Āsādha sukla* 2).

According to Hari he spent Rs. 150 on cloth (*kanā*) for the *patti*, a *dhoti* to wear while working, colours, glue and earthen pots (to use as colour containers) even before they had begun the work[10]. He anticipated his *kutumba* would spend at least Rs. 2000 during the weeks before *Ratha jātrā* (such figures are, of course, not exact). It ought to be noted that while Hātī took pride in not accepting the Rs. 3 he was entitled to for this specific *sebā*, he accepted Rs. 800 worth of *Jhadeinedā* (a sweet; *mahāprasada* from the *Jagannātha* temple). This was to be shared with the other *hākim* and distributed amongst the painters who came to help painting the *anasara pattis* and indicates the importance of redistribution for social relations. Hātī and Hari could afford to refuse the money, since (as already mentioned) their main source of income was from sign boards and shell work.

Hari confirmed that *sebakas* continue to do the *sebā* so that they may get their faces "lit" by fire from the temple kitchen after their death. There can be no doubt that this plays a significant role in the painters' attitude towards *sebā* work. When asked whether he disliked the idea of *sebā* work which is not paid for, Nārāyana Mahāranā's (C.1.-s-i-l.) younger brother said:

> "The matter is not about good or bad. If we worked for the temple[11], *Jagannātha* will set fire to our face after our death (*āme malāpare Jagannātha āma muhan re niān debe*). That fire comes from the temple kitchen".

10 Das writes that the temple authorities provide the cloth for the *anasara pattis* at *Akshyaya trutīyā* (*Baishākha sukla* 3) (1982:38). According to the temple authorities (personal communication November 1991) and the *Chitrakāras*, the painters have to meet all expenses.

11 Nārāyana Mahāranā's household members are not *sebakas* and therefore not entitled to get the temple fire.

During a discussion of the *anasara* images Hātī explained that they have to paint *Balabhadra* because it is *Kali juga*[12] and went on to complain about the lack of support from the Indian Government. In fact they paint *Balarāma* (*Bāsuki's* incarnation during *Dvāpara juga*) or *Seshanaga*, terms which the painters use interchangeably[13]. *Jagannātha* is painted in his form as *Nārāyana* and *Subhadrā* as *Bhubanehsvarī*.

Rather than talk about the images the *Chitrakāras* actually paint, Hātī chose to talk about the three figures (*murtīs*) *Balabhadra, Subhadrā, and Jagannātha*[14]. This allowed him to talk about the current inauspicious *Kālī juga* and thus provided an explanation for the financial difficulties of the contemporary *Chitrakāras*.

Unlike ordinary painting work the making of *anasara pattis* is subject to several restrictions. For example the room in which the painting takes place must be ritually clean (*shuddha*) and the painter must not be in a state of

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12 *Kali juga*, the current epoch, is a period of decay and righteousness has remained to the extent of one-fourth only. The four *jugas* have distinct qualities. *Satya juga* is the age in which righteousness (*dharma*) is eternal, it is a golden age. In the *Treteyā juga dharma* decreased by a fourth and in *Dvāpara juga* it was diminished by two quarters.

13 According to Jagannātha Mahāpātra the incarnations of *Visnu* and *Bāsuki* in the four *jugas* are as follows:

Satya juga:	*Visnu* rests on *Bāsuki*.
Treteyā juga:	*Visnu* incarnates as the elder brother *Rāma* and *Bāsuki* incarnates as *Lakshmana*.
Dvāpara juga:	*Bāsuki* reincarnates as the elder brother *Balarāma* and *Visnu* reincarnates as *Krishna*.
Kali juga: as	*Bāsuki* reincarnates as the elder brother *Balabhadra* and *Visnu* reincarnates as *Jagannātha*.

14 The *Jagannātha* figure (*murti*) in the temple is considered the "true" form of the deity, as it contains the immortal life substance or "*Brahman* substance" (*brahmapadārtha*). Tripathi has described the rituals concerned with the renewal of *Jagannātha* and mentions how this substance is shifted from the old statue of *Jagannātha* into the new one (1978:223-264). The *murtī* is renewed in the years which have two *Āsādhas*. (The extra *Āsādha* is known as *puruottama māsa* all over India). See also Eck (1981:54).

pollution (*chhuān*)[15]. One has to wear a new *dhoti* (or at least one that is ritually clean[16]) while working, observe a fast (*upāsa kariba*)[17] during the period of making the *anasara pattis* and wash ones' feet before entering the painting room.

However, not all restrictions are followed. For example Hātī was supposed to take a ritually purifying bath in the Narendra tank in Puri before he attended the *sādhibandhā* ceremony but the old man could not be bothered to walk all the way. He explained: "We do not care about all these rules any more".

A *Brahmin* household across the lane permitted their house to be used for the making of the *anasara pattis*, a task which requires space[18]. Hari's wife and sister prepared the *pattis* approximately a week before *Snāna Purnima*[19]. A new piece of cloth (*kanā*) was placed on the even cement floor and smeared with a paste of tamarind (*tentuli*)[20]. Another piece of cloth was then applied and smeared with tamarind (see figure 56 for an illustration of the process). When it was dry the canvas was turned and smeared with tamarind on the other side. It was then left till next day when the women began to smoothen the canvas by scrubbing it with, first, a

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15 For twelve days after a birth or death within the *kutumba* a painter is *chhuān* and will not be allowed to paint the *anasara pattis* or any *patā* for *pujā*.

16 Hari for example was wearing his old *gāmuchhā* (a type of *dhoti*) but it is *shuddha* because it was soaked in water containing cow dung, mustard, oil and tumeric at the time of purchase.

17 The painters call it fast but actually they eat *sātvika* foods such as rice flakes (*chudā*) and rice which can be served for deities (*grua*).

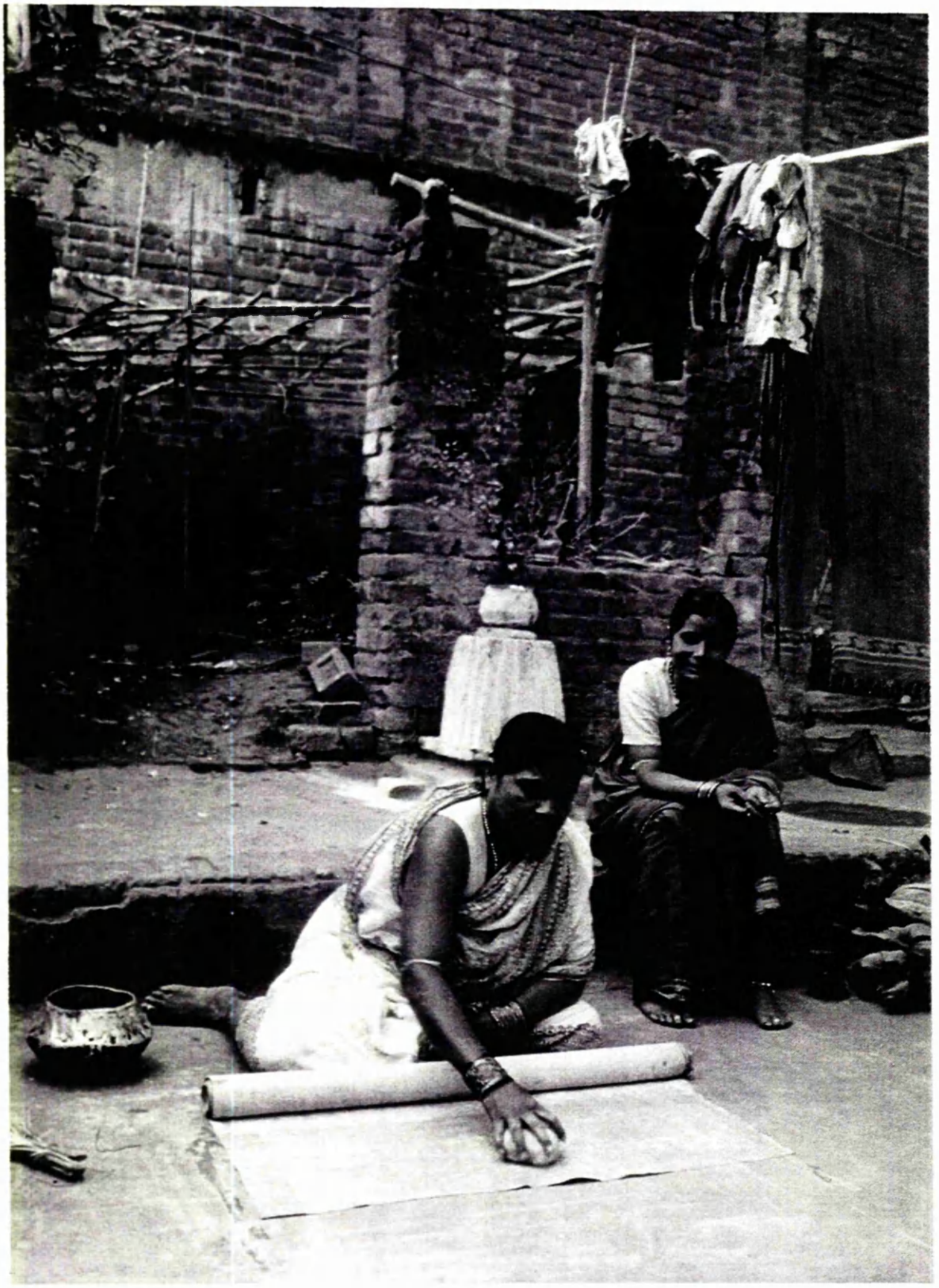
18 The *Brahmins* considered it a honour to have the *anasara pattis* made in their house.

19 That enables the painters to start the actual painting a few days before *Ekādasi* (*Jyestha sukla* 11). Hari's family used to begin at *Ekādasi*, which is considered to be an auspicious day to begin the work but decided against it because they needed more time to make *pattis* of a high standard.

20 The surface must be even to ensure an even *patti*.

Figure 56: Lakshmana Mahāranā and his wife Sarasvatī prepare *patti* in Raghurājpur, 1991.

Figure 57: Jagannātha Mahāpātra's wife Tikinā Mahāpātra smoothens *patti*, Raghurājpur 1988.



rough stone and, later, a fine stone (see figure 57 for an illustration of the process). The smooth canvas was then placed on the roof to dry[21].

When the women had prepared the *pattis* men took over the work of painting the *anasara pattis*. Women were then no longer allowed to touch the *pattis*, which must in no circumstances be polluted (*chhuān*)[22].Hātī and Hari copied the *anasara* sketch (*tipanā*) made by their father when he was still alive. With the aid of carbon paper, Hātī transferred these sketches to the *pattis*. When asked why they preferred to use the old sketches rather than make new *tipanā* Hari said:

> "Before it took us one to two days to make a sketch but now we can make ten in one day provided we use carbon paper - that is our *research*![23]"

Before a painter begins his task, he does *pranāma* showing god (*Bhagabān*) respect by letting the end of the brush touch his forehead (see figure 58) [24]. According to the painters it is not possible to work if *Bhagabān* is not present. A painter will therefore invoke *Bhagabān* who transcribes himself through the painter and thus ensures that a perfect painting emerges. However, the *Chitrakāra* is also understood to contribute to the execution of the work.

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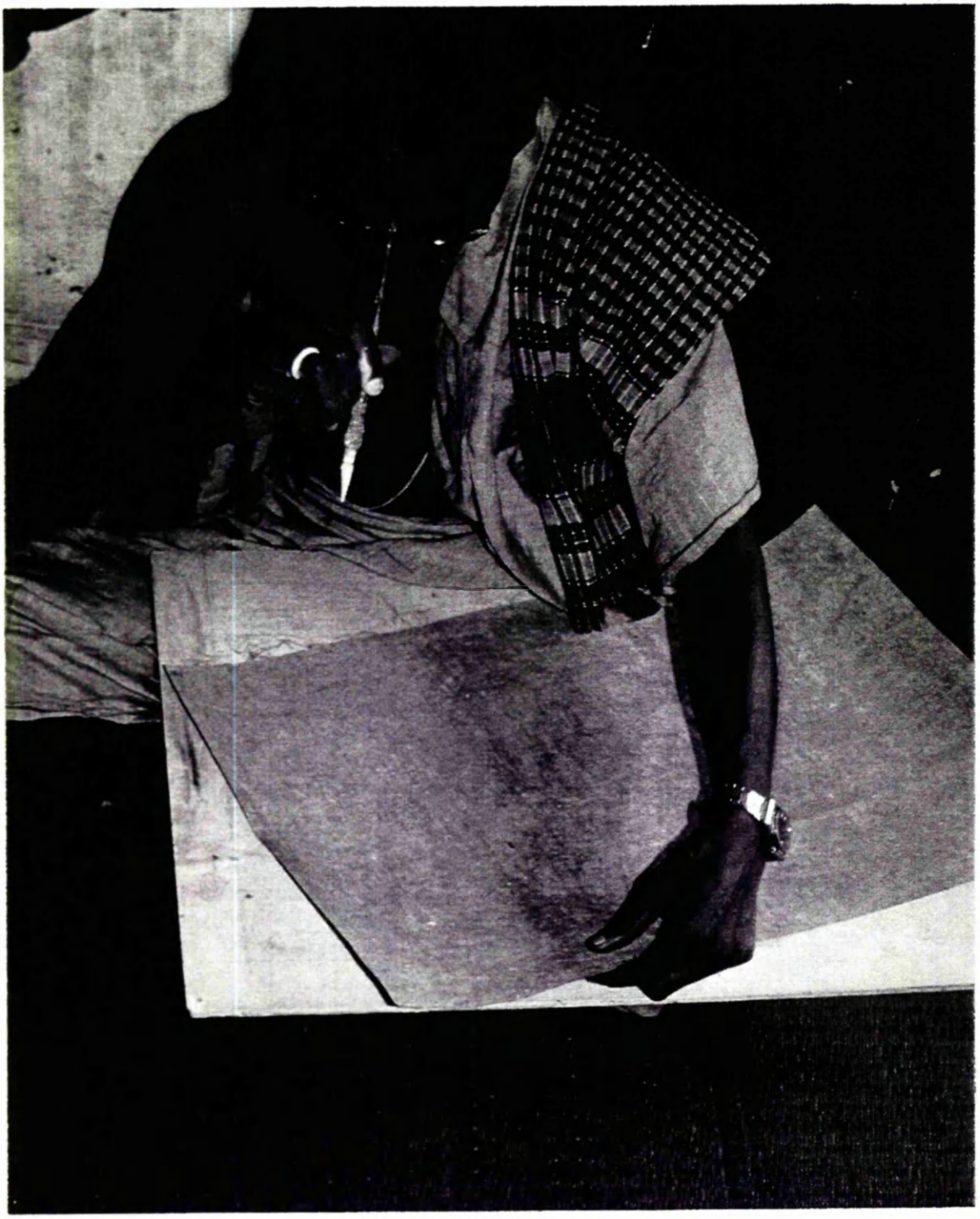
21 Rain makes it very difficult, if not impossible, to prepare the *pattis* in time.

22 The shadow of a menstruating woman, for example, will pollute the *pattis*.

23 When I met Hari Mahāranā January 1994 he permitted me to write this on condition that I stress that he and his brother can make the sketch without the help of carbon paper but use it to save time.

24 This gesture is also used when greeting a superior, i.e. *guru* or elders. *Pranāma* is never done when a painter begins a commercial work unless it is considered extremely demanding. Normally *pranāma* is only done in the morning before one begins a painting made for religious purposes. During the work with the *anasara pattis*, however, painters did it every time they sat down to paint after a break. In contrast to the majority of painters, Jagannātha Mahāpātra from Raghurājpur said that the gesture had nothing to do with *Bhagabān* but is simply a way of paying respect to the art one is about to make.

Figure 58: The late Arjunā Mahāranā does *pranāma* before beginning his *anukula patta*.



On the one hand the painters see themselves partly as passive instruments of *Bhagabān*. The painters explain how they have an image in their mind which they copy. In other words they replicate already existing divine models[25]. On the other hand they are partly agents involved in a process of innovation because they influence the actual execution. So the resulting painting can be seen to be a common product of both *Bhagabān* and the painter. This aspect of the local understanding of the *patta* painters in terms of their connection with divine force suggests a devotional relation with *Bhagabān* in the *bhakti* idiom[26].

Hari described the ritual he carries out which marks the commencement of painting[27] and commented on the role *Bhagabān* or *Ishvara* plays in all work:

> "When we sit down to paint in the morning, the first thing we do is to touch the brush on our forehead (*tulī mundare lagibā*). Nothing will come without divine power (*Ishvara shakti*). You can not work if a divine power does not enter you".

Kālucharana Bārika (K.) also stressed the importance of the role Ishvara plays for the outcome of a painting but added that one should not expect too much of Ishvara:

> "Nothing can be done if *Ishvara* does not teach (*bateibā*). However, we should not expect *Ishvara* to come and mix the colours for us".

After Hātī (assisted by his brother Hari) had completed the carbon sketch of *Balabhadra*, Hātī began to transfer the sketch of *Subhadrā* to the *patti*. In the meantime Hari's son had decided to apply the colour *geru* (used to

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25 As Eck says the "fashioning of the image is not left to the 'imagination' of the individual artist" (1981:51). Eck describes the creation of an image as partly a religious discipline in which the artist "is to visualize the completed image in the mind's eye" (ibid.:52).

26 The outcome of medieval devotional movements, *bhakti* stresses the individual devotee's ability to achieve communion with the deity or the divine.

27 The ritual underscores the transition from everyday activities to those of religious work and belongs to the category of rituals which have been described as "rites of passage" (Van Gennep 1960).

make sketches [*tipanā*]) on top of the carbon sketch of *Balabhadra.* Hari thought that was a waste of time:

> "The line has come all right by the carbon copy, so why are you wasting time applying *geru* on top of it? It is a sketch (*tipanā seiā*), but the *process* is modern (*adhunika*).

While the elder generation (Hātī and Hari) did not have second thoughts about using new methods, the younger (Hari's son) felt obliged to do *tipanā* the traditional way even if a sketch was already there. In response to my inquiries as to why he did *tipanā*, Hari's son simply stated that it was the tradition.

Hātī is getting old and can not participate fully in the painting of the *pattis.* As Hari said:

> "My brother finds it difficult to work nowadays. As soon as he has finished *tipanā* he leaves the rest of the work to me, only to think of mangoes, rice flakes (*chudā*) and our financial situation".

There are three men who can take over the responsibility of being *hākim* for the *Balabhadra* and *Subhadrā bāda* when Hātī decides to pass over the work or dies. One of them is Hātī's son, another is Hātī's elder brother's son and the third is Hātī's younger brother Hari. Hari has a strong wish to take over the *sebā* from Hātī - an issue often discussed by Hari and his wife. If Hari takes over, the *sebā* is likely to be passed over to his son after Hari's death.

It is not only when making sketches but also when using colours that the painters try to save time. Rather than using time-consuming stone colours, which need grinding, the painters buy the colours in the bazaar. According to Hari nobody can see the difference anyway. However, not all painters approve of the use of market colours for *anasara pattis.* When I discussed it with Nārāyana Mahāranā (C.1.-s-i-l.) from Puri he expressed surprise and

indignation. The temple authorities, however, do not have any objections as long as the colours used are water colours[28].

The painting of *anasara pattis* is a big event in Hātī's household. On *Snāna purnimā* after eight days and nights of continuous work - only interrupted by an occasional power cut - four painters were busy painting in order to finish before a local *Brahmin* came to worship the paintings (see figure 59). After he had gone, the women of the household performed their own worship (*pujā*) of the deities. Prior to the official collection of the *anasara pattis*, the household had rented a video player, stereo and Hindi film and placed a sofa in the lane. Relatives had come from the village of Dānda Sāhi to participate in the celebrations. Early next morning a procession came from the temple followed by police. Another *pujā* was performed before Hātī, followed by the procession, carried the *pattis* to the temple[29]. After the *anasara pattis* reached their destination within the temple, a *Brahmin* priest infused the images with life by touching the eyes of the deities in the pictures[30]. After this, women are no longer allowed to worship the images.

While Hātī rested at the entrance of the temple, the procession continued to the home of the other *hākim*, Nārāyana Mahāranā, who was responsible for painting the *Jagannātha anasara patti*[31] as well as a small patti used during *anasara* as a substitute for the *Jagannātha* image known as the

28 Oil based colours are, as we shall see later, considered polluting.

29 For a detailed description of a similar procession see Das 1982:38-39.

30 Eyes are associated with the life of the image and the consecration is accomplished by the creation or opening of its eyes (Babb 1981:387; Eck 1981:5-6, 40).

31 I will refer to the sebāka Nārāyana Mahāranā adding his position as *hākim* to his name to escape possible confusion caused by the fact that two *Chitrakāras* from Puri called Nārāyana Mahāranā are discussed in this thesis.

Figure 59: Painters complete *Subhadra's anasara patti*, Puri 1992. Note her hair and blouse which has been painted with what painters call *shade*.

"purifier of the sinners" (*patitapābana*)[32]. It had taken Nārāyana and his brothers-in-law two days to complete the *patti*. The difference in quality of the *Jagannātha patti* on the one hand and the *Subhadrā* and *Balabhadra patti* on the other was striking. While the latter two were painted with minute details, the *Jagannātha patti* had barely any decoration and moreover was made with very rough lines[33].

Hari's household had foreseen this and gave two reasons for the poor quality[34]. First of all the *hākim* Nārāyana was not gifted with a good hand and secondly he only began the work on the auspicious day *Ekādasī* (*Jyestha sukla* 11), which according to Hari and Hātī was too late to produce work of high quality[35]. According to some of the Puri painters, Nārāyana's lack of skill was caused by a spell which was cast (*mantra karithile*) on him when he was young[36]. Ever since it happened Nārāyana had difficulties speaking, concentrating and painting. However a *hākim* can theoretically always employ other *Chitrakāras* to do the work. Nārāyana,

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32 This image of *Jagannātha* is placed at the eastern entrance of the temple. The purpose is to benefit people who are not allowed within the temple premises, i.e. Scheduled castes and non-Hindus.

33 Starza-Majewski is misleading when - in a discussion of a 17th century *patta* from the *Jagannātha* temple - he calls those *hākims* responsible for the *anasara pattis* "master painters", a term which has associations with the term "Master Craftsmen" and thus likely to be understood as referring to highly skilled painters (1993b:56). Starza-Majewski makes the far fetched claim that the execution of the contemporary examples made in a graceful linear style suggests that the *Anantavrata* painting of 1670 was done in the workshop of the Mahāranā [Hātī Mahāranā] responsible for the contemporary *anasara* picture of *Ananta* (ibid.). However, the "graceful linear style" is also apparent in paintings made by some of the other *Chitrakāras* in the Puri district and Starza-Majewski's hypothesis appears to be based on slender and unconvincing evidence.

34 They along with other *Chitrakāras* considered the *Jagannātha patti* to be of a poor quality. The criticism was never made in public but emerged as part of the response to my question of what the painters thought of the painting made by the *hākim* Nārāyana Mahāranā. It ought to be noted that the painting nevertheless is suitable for worship.

35 They began the *anasara patti* some days before *Ekādasī* and thus gave a priority to the time needed rather than whether work was begun at an auspicious moment.

36 Williams notes that painters were not disturbed to find that a work they had ranked low was by a *hākim* because the hereditary position is not equated with artistic talent (1988:13).

however, preferred to do as much as he could himself in order to keep as much of the salary from the temple as possible.

Nārāyana Mahāranā got his entire income from ritual work for the *Jagannātha* temple, other temples, and monasteries in Puri. Once he has paid the painters who help him to perform his duties a couple of hundred rupees was left over per month[37]. The family is very poor compared to the painters who sell their crafts in the market[38]. After Nārāyana left to hand over the small *patitapābana patti*, his wife talked about their financial problems:

> "Now he has gone again. What is the use of it all [the *sebā* work]. We cannot even feed ourselves".

The attitudes of the two *hākims* and their families to the *anasara* work differed noticeably. Hātī and his *kutumba* identified strongly with their roles as the makers of *anasara pattis*. For Hātī's household the period before *Snāna purnimā* had an almost "liminal" character[39]. While working on the *anasara* paintings the *Chitrakāras* moved almost freely in the house of their *Brahmin* neighbours, who (as a favour) let the painters prepare the *anasara pattis* in their (*Brahmin*) household, the only restricted area being the kitchen and the *pujā* room (in which no person of lower caste can enter). Moreover journalists from as far as Calcutta came to photograph their otherwise relatively unnoticed work[40].

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37 Some months he has a little more and other months he has next to nothing. Despite several visits to the Temple authorities in Puri I never succeeded in getting the exact payment for the specific *sebā* works. These payments are noted down in the temple records and should in theory be accessible to the public.

38 In chapter 7 we shall see examples of painters earning several thousand rupees in a single transaction with tourists.

39 It is liminal in the sense that things which were otherwise not possible could suddenly take place.

40 The permission by the *Brahmins* to let the painters use their house must of course be seen in relation to the religious significance of the paintings they made there - most Orissan households would be honoured to have the *anasara pattis* made in their house. Furthermore,

By refusing to accept the Rs. 3, Hātī indicated that it was the *sebā* itself for Lord *Jagannātha* rather than the salary which was of importance to him. This importance ascribed to the making of the *anasara pattis* was, moreover, reflected in the careful and minute execution of the *Balabhadra* (*Balarāma*) and *Subhadrā* (*Bhubanehsvarī*) images.

For Nārāyana Mahāranā the anasara *sebā* was just one of several in the yearly ritual cycle. Unlike some of the other *sebā*s the *anasara sebā* was an expense rather than a source of income. Nārāyana could not, however, give up this *sebā* because he depended on the income from the other *sebās*. A *sebaka* can not accept only specific *sebā* works but must accept all the work during a yearly cycle or leave the *sebā* to other *Chitrakāras*.

Relations between *Chitrakāras* and their *Brahmin* Patrons

The majority of *Chitrakāras*, however, do not serve, as *sebakas*, for the *Jagannātha* temple. They work for other temples, and/or are involved in patron-client relationships and/or paint for tourist consumption. In this section, we shall take a close look at the relationship between painters and their patrons. The character of the relationships are ambiguous and depend upon the attitude of the individual *Brahmin* as well as a painter's financial dependence and feeling of self-worth.

Many *Chitrakāras* do not give up even badly paid work (such as *duāre lekhā* discussed below) because the consequence is that they will loose other ritual work as well. The household with whom a *Chitrakāra* has a patron-client relation brings all their *patās* during a yearly cycle to the same

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their decision might have been influenced by the fact that photographers and journalists came to see the painters at work and thus visited the *Brahmin* household.

Chitrakāra and expects him to paint in their house at ritual occasions[41]. If a *Chitrakāra* gives up one task, and thereby all the ritual work of the yearly cycle, it might be difficult to manage outside the tourist season and the periods when the majority of pilgrims come[42].

Economics is a crucial factor to consider in understanding why painters continue to work for *Brahmin* patrons, as will be apparent in this as well as the following section. It is, however, not the only factor: merit-making plays a role too. Before we look at this we shall turn our attention to the relationship between painters and their *Brahmin* patrons.

Duare Lekhā or Painting of Doors

At *rekhā pānchami* (*Bhādraba, krusna* 5), Nrusingha Mahāranā (E.1.1.) and the late Arjunā Mahāranā's son Abhi (E.2.1.1.) went to the *Shasana Brahmin* village Birapratāppur to paint images of *Siva* and *Ganesh* on the doors of *Brahmin* houses[43]. This particular task was shared between Nrusingha and his cousin Arjunā. They were the only *Chitrakāras* in Dānda Sāhi who still had an inherited right to cultivate some pieces of land (*jagir*) and keep half of the harvest. According to Arjunā and Nrusingha this arrangement was not one which was beneficial for the painters, firstly because they never got their due share of the crops and secondly because this payment meant that they were paid in kind rather than cash.

Nrusingha had given the surface of the doors a coat of chalk the day before and Abhi and he were therefore able to begin the painting work right away.

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41 Normally one *patā* depicts one deity but some *patās* depict as many as four deities. When such a *patā* is brought to a *Chitrakāra*, he will usually only repaint the deity to be worshipped.

42 The tourist season runs approximately from *Kārtika* (October, November) to *Chaitra* (March, April).

43 In contrast to the houses of the *Chitrakāras*, the houses of the *Shāsana Brahmins* have several rooms and a big courtyard in the centre of the building.

While Nrusingha drew the lines - called *kalā* - which give the image form, Abhi followed him making decorative lines, dots and a frame around the motif with the colour *geru*.

They went from house to house painting all the doors[44]. On the front door and also, if possible, the back door[45] *Nandikesvara, Ganesh* and *Bhairava*[46] are painted, whereas only *Bhairava* is painted on the doors within the house. In some cases where a household had started cooking or people were actually eating, the *Brahmins* showed reluctance to let the painters in despite the working relationship. This caution must, of course, have been enforced because of the polluting foreigner (the anthropologist) who accompanied the painters. However, painters claim that it is not unusual to be told to return to paint after the *Brahmins* have finished their meal.

In other households the visit of a foreigner was a sufficiently exotic occurrence to make up for the risk of defilement. However, that did not change the relationship between the *Chitrakāras* and the *Brahmins*. A *Brahmin* demanded that Nrusingha get hold of a chair for the anthropologist. Rather than using the polite form of address *mausā*[47] he simply ordered Nrusingha to bring the chair. This occurrence has roots in the prior relationship between ruler (*sāmanta*) and ruled (*prajā*), where a

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44 *Rekhā panchami* is not celebrated in households where a person has died until after the first death anniversary (*barsikiā*). In general broken doors are not decorated.

45 It might also be a door within the house if for example the back door does not have space enough to contain the whole image.

46 *Bhairava* is *Śiva* in his most destructive aspect and *Nandikesvara* is his bull.

47 *Mausā* means mother's sister's husband. This term is used when one addresses a man who could be one's mother's sister's husband and it implies respect. High caste people do not use it when talking to people of a lower caste.

Sudra was expected to address a *Shāsana Brahmin* "*Sāntā*" (Lord or master) if male and "*Sāntāni*" if female[48].

Some time before lunch a *Brahmin* woman told Nrusingha and Abhi to hurry up, she wanted to start cooking. Enjoying himself Nrusingha told her she would have to wait until new batteries had been brought for my camera and stressed that it was crucial that his work was photographed[49]. Sitting on the steps leading up to the house, Nrusingha carefully calculated how many houses were left to be painted. He was tired and simply wanted the work to come to an end. It is my impression that my presence put Nrusingha in a relatively strong position, allowing him to carry out his work as he found appropriate. When an old *Brahmin* woman complained that the lines were too thick (*motā*), Nrusingha asked her what she had expected for a payment of only two coconuts.

It was, however, not all *Brahmin* households who acted to confirm the (unequal) relationship between the two *jātis*. One of the households not only invited all of us for tea and snacks but some of the members also drunk and ate in our company[50]. While we ate, the household head platted two braids of grass (called *pendua*) to which he fixed *mantras* written on small bits of paper. The *penduas* were to be hung from the roof in front of the doors of the entrance. While platting, the old man told us that he used to make one for each door in the house but had become lazy in his old age. The sanskrit

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48 In the *Shāsana* villages as well as the villages which serve them, these terms of address are still in use.

49 I had not actually asked Nrusingha to stop his work while a little boy brought me new batteries. Nrusingha, however, needed a break and was happy to have an excuse to state his importance.

50 This household was related to a friend of mine from Puri. If that had not been so, we would probably not have had anything. It was only later I realised how unusual an event it had been - for several days afterwards Nrusingha spoke of little else than his tea drinking with the *Brahmins*.

mantras were dedicated to Lord *Siva* and *Visnu*[51]. Among other things the *mantra* dedicated to Lord *Siva* concerns the prevention of diseases. As will be remembered the ritual took place in the month of *Bhādraba* when the rains are continuous causing floods and spreading diseases. The action, timing and meaning of the ritual are therefore closely interdependent entities as has been shown at more general levels by Babb (1975:69-101), Pugh (1983:27-50), and Wadley (1983:51-86).

In the evening the head of each of the *Brahmin* households would worship each painted deity and bind the *pendua* to the roof chanting the attached *mantras*. After the deity had eaten, some of the *prasāda* would be thrown outside the house to "uncle tiger" (*bāghamāmū*)[52].

The next household had locked their front door and Nrusingha jokingly shouted to the owner of the house: "*Bāghamāmū duāra lekhā*" (uncle tiger, your door is about to be painted). The relationship between the *Chitrakāras* and *Brahmins* is not clearly defined. While some (few) *Brahmins* have a relatively nonchalant attitude towards *Chitrakāras*, others make sure that the painters do not forget their ritually and economically inferior position by, as we have already seen, talking down to them - thereby keeping the clear cut distinction between the two *jātis*.

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51 The *mantra* began as follows (translated by the old *Brahmin*): "Lord *Siva* protect us from diseases and help us to get rid of difficulties. We are praying to him who is decorated with a snake and has a blue throat. To the manifestation of him I pray, take care of my house". To the text dedicated to Lord *Siva* was added a text dedicated to *Visnu*. The latter described a demon who always gave people what they wanted. But the demon was proud which annoyed *Visnu* who therefore decided to descend in his incarnation as a dwarf. *Visnu* then asked the demon whether he could give him whatever he needed to which the demon asserted. *Visnu* asked the demon for as much land as he could cover in three steps. The demon agreed to grant this wish. However, the dwarf grew immensely; covering the earth in the first step and killing the demon. The *mantra* ended as follows: "As you killed the demon kill all bad things. I pray to the deity on the door to take care of me".

52 "Uncle tiger" was simply "uncle tiger" and any attempt on my part to get an explanation failed. I was reminded of Sperber's problems with the meaning of a shrub called "oloma". Just like Sperber I had to come to terms with the fact that I have not got a clue as to what "uncle tiger" might mean, and, in Sperber's words, I doubt that there is anything at all there to be known (1975:18).

While Nrusingha and Abhi were painting, Arjunā Mahāranā (Abhi's father) came to chat. According to him, the paintings in this *Shāsana Brahmin* village were of a higher quality than in other *Brahmin* villages, simply because they were made for *Shāsana Brahmins*. When asked whether he was going to paint, he answered by pulling a face, indicating that this sort of work was not appropriate for him. Arjunā did not consider work for *Brahmin* patrons fitting for a travelled Master Craftsman[53].

His fame as a *patta* painter meant that he did not depend upon the income from work for *Brahmin* patrons. Other reasons, such as the accumulation of merit (*punya*) were not considered sufficiently important to make Arjunā continue in the working relationship[54]. During the visit Arjunā spoke to the *Brahmin* about Delhi and the foreign countries Arjunā had visited. There was no trace of submissiveness in Arjunā's posture or gestures while speaking with the *Brahmin* - he had simply come to speak about his experiences outside Orissa rather than client services. The self-assured way in which Arjunā spoke with the *Brahmin* was indeed a rare sight during my stay in Orissa.

We all returned to Arjunā's house. While Nrusingha and Abhi had been working for the *Brahmins*, Arjunā had painted *Nandikesvara*, *Bhairava* and *Ganesh* on his own entrance door. Compared to the paintings made in the village of Birapratāppur, Arjunā's painting was made with minute details. Arjunā was one of the few *Chitrakāras* who celebrated *duāra lekhā* in his own house, without actually painting for others.

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53 Maduro has argued that the painters of Nathdwara, Rajasthan, consider traditional work such as painting the walls at an auspicious occasion degrading "because one is forced to work outside in the streets like a common labourer, in plain view of everybody" (1976a:65).

54 We shall later see examples of painters who consider acquiring merit very important.

In Puri *rekhā pānchami* had passed by almost unnoticed in Nārāyana Mahāranā's household. His brothers had gone to a few houses to paint and had been paid Rs. 5 - 20 depending on the number of doors. In order to save time and money, two *Brahmins* had ordered the images painted on paper. Some *Brahmins* simply write *Siva* on the doors rather than paying a *Chitrakāra* to paint - an act which indicates how content has a higher priority than aesthetics when it comes to work made for religious purposes.

Another *Chitrakāra* in Puri, Hari Mahāranā explained why in the 1980s his household had stopped painting the doors of *Brahmins* during "*duāra lekhā*":

> "We were fed up (*birakta lāguchi*) because people always underestimated the number of doors when they had to pay us for our work. If they said four doors it was often eight because some of them were double doors".

Since the decision was taken, Hari's household has only received and carried out orders for *duāra lekhā* at home, painting the deities on paper, sold for one rupee per piece.

While the painters in the villages are still paid in kind, the painters in Puri are paid in cash. They used to get gifts (*bheti*, for example rice and vegetables) but found that inconvenient and wanted cash. Nārāyana Mahāranā expressed it this way: "Why bother to sell coconuts when we can just get the money directly - after all we can't buy colours with nuts".

Patās for Household Worship

The main users of *patās* for worship (cf. chapter 3, section III) are the *Brahmin sebakas* of the *Jagannātha* temple[55]. These depictions of deities are repainted once a year, prior to a specific day in the ritual calendar[56].

> "It is *Krishna's* birthday tomorrow! (*Kāli Krishna janma*!) Let his mother die! (*Tā mā maru*[57])".

Nārāyana Mahāranā (C.1.-s-i-l.) from Puri expressed surprise when a *Brahmin* woman came to his household and asked him to repaint her *Krishna patā* before *Krishna Janmadina* the following day (*Bhādraba, krusna* 8). Nārāyana had been busy trying to finish an order by Lingarāj Mahāranā (C.1.1.) from Raghurājpur and had forgotten all about the *pujā*.

Nārāyana could afford to forget it because he had as little as possible to do with *pujā* work. As the eldest of five brothers, he took over his fathers work for *Brahmin* patrons when he died. Nārāyana, however, usually let his brothers paint the *patās* and *murtīs* and only went himself when he was forced to do so. Some of the *Brahmins* with whom they had patron-client relationships only accepted a work if Nārāyana had given the final touch to the eyes. He therefore often had to participate in the very last stage of a painting.

The final touch to the eyes is considered very auspicious work. Hari Mahāranā (A.2.) from Puri once commented upon the relationship between the *Chitrakāras* and the infusion of life to a painting of a deity:

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55 Painters say they have some patron *sebākas* of other *jātis* but I only came across patrons of *Brahmin jāti*.

56 i.e. *Nrusingha patās* are repainted prior to *Nrusingha janma* (*Baishākha sukla* 13), *Durgā patā's* are repainted just before *Durgā pujā* and so forth.

57 This statement, an example of the wonderfully broad Puri slang, is used when people are surprised.

"It is in our body (*eitā āma dehare achhi*). It is our righteous work (*dharma kāma*) - it is auspicious work (*subha kāma*)".

In contrast to the majority of *patta* paintings sold at the market, the *patās* for worship always depict a deity from the front so both eyes can be seen (see p. 293). A deity can be worshipped only in this form known as *sampurna murtī* or complete figure. A deity painted in profile is considered an incomplete figure (*asampurna murtī*).

According to one of Nārāyana's younger brothers, Nārāyana did not work for their *Brahmin* patrons work because he was a great craftsman who could paint fine, thin lines whereas his brothers were just ordinary craftsmen. Nārāyana preferred not to paint *patās* or *murtīs* for *pujā* because he thought it would ruin his hands:

"We [Nārāyana here refers to Master Craftsmen] have been doing fine work (*saru kāma*). If we again do thick work (*motā kāma*) our hands will be ruined (*hāta kharāp heijiba*)".

It was therefore the rest of his family that was kept busy during the days before the various *pujās*. In the room facing the lane his mother and brothers repainted the many *patās* only occasionally making a new one if a *Brahmin* had found that necessary (cf. chapter 3, figure 55). The fact that *patās* are generally repainted distinguishes them from the *patta* paintings made for the market.

Most *Brahmins* would bring the *patās* late but that was usually not a problem because the household preferred to have all the *patās* before they began the task. In that way they could work faster and unless a *Brahmin* had stressed he wanted a high quality *patā* - and had paid accordingly - the paintings were executed in a rush.

However, according to Gopāla Mahāranā (E.1.3.1.) from Raghurājpur, one should not rush a painting meant for worship:

> "It will not be good for *pujā* because it does not have the feeling (*bhāba āseni*). Devotion (*bhakti*) comes according to the emotion (*bhāba nei kiri bhakti*). If you see a thing and it gives you a mood (*bhāba*), then *bhakti* will come".

Gopāla's attitude has a parallel in Eck's discussion of the relation between *silpasāstras* and the making of divine images. Eck notes that an "image is [...] supposed to be beautiful, since it will be the abode of a deity" (1981:51). However, the majority of painters rush the painting of *patās* because of the low payment - the *Brahmins* are generally not prepared to pay more for the time required to make a work which they and the *Chitrakāras* will consider of a higher quality.

After Nārāyana Mahāranā's mother had removed cobwebs and dust, she and the brothers of Nārāyana began painting the *patās*. The procedure followed was the same as for *patta* paintings. There was, however, one difference, only water colours could be used: enamel paint and lacquer were not acceptable. Oil paint and lacquer are both considered unclean (*ashuddha*) and therefore polluting.

Hari Mahāranā (A.2.) (Puri) gave one explanation as to why these colours are not acceptable:

> "The temple would never accept it. *Jagannātha* does not like enamel colour, it is a chemical colour and it is foreign (*bilāti*) and unclean (*ashuddha*)"[58].

Nrusingha Mahāranā (E.1.1.) gave another explanation while painting *Siva's* bull *Brusabha*:

> "If we paint with oil paint *Siva* will not sit on the bull due to the bad smell (*gandha*)".

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58 In a similar manner the *Jagannātha* temple does not accept certain vegetables which are considered foreign (*bilāti*). This is briefly discussed in chapter 7 page 455.

A few days before *Durgā pujā* (*Āshwina, sukla* 7-10), Nārāyana's mother gave a *Durgā patā* a coat of lacquer. I later asked Nārāyana whether they often lacquered the *patās*. He didn't believe it had taken place and asked his wife and younger brother whether a lacquered *patā* had left the house. They explained that the woman when ordering the painting had asked them to lacquer it, so that the painting would not be spoilt from the water sprinkled during *pujā*. According to Nārāyana, her father would never have allowed such a mistake (*bhul*) to happen but the woman didn't know any better.

Like Arjunā, Nārāyana had given up as much of his work for *Brahmin* patrons as possible leaving the main part of the work to his brothers. Neither of them considered that sort of work fitting for Master Craftsmen. According to Arjunā, *Chitrakāras* give up working for *Brahmin* patrons because they are not sufficiently paid. If they had the choice between a big order (well paid) and an order for a *pujā patā*, they would choose the big order. Money is in other words an important factor to take into account when considering the reasons why *Chitrakāras* continue or discontinue ritual work.

Kshetrabāsi Mahāranā from Raghurājpur used to go to the *Shāsana Brahmin* village Jhinkiriā during *Rekhā Pānchami* (*Bhādraba krusna* 5) and *Krishna janma* (*Bhādraba krusna* 8). In the latter case he had to repaint a *Rādhākrishna* wall painting but was not, in his opinion, paid sufficiently well. He had therefore decided to discontinue the work in the late 1980s:

> "They didn't give good money (*bhala paisā deleni*). For a figure of a man's height they only gave Rs. 10-15. So why go? Moreover they didn't give any food. It didn't suit us".

Kshetrabāsi Mahāranā belonged to one of the relatively poor craft producing households in Raghurājpur, whose main income came from making paper

masks. Despite the fact that his income was low it was sufficient to permit Kshetrabāsi to give up his work for *Brahmin* patrons.

Māguni Mahāpātra (I.2.2.1.) from Raghurājpur discontinued assisting Lingarāj Mahāranā (C.1.1.) when he went to Bhubaneshwar to work for the Lingarāj temple. Lingarāj Mahāranā had taken over his father's *sebā* and was responsible for the painting of *Siva's* chariot of the temple, a task for which the temple gave him Rs. 1500 in 1992. The money was meant to cover the cost of paint and the "salaries" Lingarāj had to pay the painters, mainly children, who assisted him. For a couple of years Māguni went to Bhubaneshwar with Lingarāj because he enjoyed the social event, but had given up because his household needed the money he could earn by staying at home painting for tourists.

Nārāyana Mahāranā's (C.1.-s-i-l.) family and Hari Mahāranā (A.2.) and his household, however, continued their ritual work. They couldn't afford to give it up and indeed depended on the cash it brought. Likewise Nrusingha Mahāranā (E.1.1.) and his family still carried out work for temples and *Brahmin* patrons and had no intention of giving it up.

The periods outside the tourist season were one of Nrusingha's main worries. While painting *Siva's* bull *Brusabha* for *Sītala sasthi* (*Jyestha sukla* 6) he said:

> "Why should we stop - if we stop then how can we manage to live when the tourist season has come to an end?"

Hari had another concern in relation to giving up work related to *pujā*:

> "If we give up a job some other *Chitrakāras* will take over, but what if all *Chitrakāras* refuse to do the job? How then can the *pujā* be held?".

This suggests that money is not the only concern the *Chitrakāras* have when deciding whether to continue to work for *Brahmin* patrons. A few

Chitrakāras state that it is the *dharma* of their *jāti* to give form to deities and that this gives them merit (*punya*). Asked whether a non-*Chitrakāra* can paint a *pujā patā* as well as a *Chitrakāra*, Hari compared a *pujā* done by a *Brahmin* and a *Shāsana Brahmin*. While a *Brahmin* rushes the *pujā* thinking only about money, a *Shāsana Brahmin* performs a pure (*khānti*) *pujā*[59]. Likewise a person will only feel his self has been purified or satisfied (*ātmā sudhhi*) if he has his *patā* made by a *Chitrakāra* who has the making of paintings for religious purposes as his *dharma*.

Some painters stressed that they would acquire *punya* when doing ritual work, but others stated that *punya* was of no importance. Some painters' answers varied according to the context in which the question was discussed. When discussing painters' use of *purānas* and the epics, Nārāyana Mahāranā, for example, stated that *sebā* work and work for *Brahmin* patrons always give *punya*. Some days earlier, however, when his family was busy painting *Krishna patās* and I had asked him whether such work would give merit, Nārāyana's answer had been:

> "No, what merit? (*nā punya kana*?) It is business (*Eta byabasāya*").

There is, in any case, a limit to the importance given to *punya*. The day before *Ganesh pujā* (*Bhādraba sukla* 4), a *Brahmin* came to Nārāyana's house. Nārāyana's mother was painting *patās* and when she saw the *Brahmin* she shouted that he could forget about having his *patā* repainted if he did not first pay them what he owed for last year's work. The *Brahmin* finally gave in and went home to collect the required money.

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59 Some villagers ironically call the *Brahmins dakshinā Brahmins*, indicating that they are more concerned with getting the payment (*dakshinā*) for their ritual service than doing the *pujā*.

Durgā pujā and its Climax: *Anukula*[60] *Kāma* in Raghurājpur

In the village of Raghurājpur, *Durgā pujā* is considered by far the most important *pujā* in the yearly cycle.

> According to the local legend[61] the deity *Durgā* used to stay in Puri with the ancestors of Rāma Mahāranā. However, seven generations ago the family split up and one of the brothers brought his household including his daughter Durgā to Raghurājpur. One night he came home late and called for somebody to open the door. Although he could not see anybody when the door opened, he could clearly smell the characteristic smell of *Durgā*[62]. That night the whole household dreamt that *Durgā* was angry. The goddess complained that the household obviously did not care for her since they called their daughter Durgā. She had therefore decided to leave and go to stay in the room next to the *Gopinātha* temple. She had sworn that she would never again face the house in which she had stayed. The next morning the daughter Durgā was found dead on the floor.

Durgā still has her place of worship next to the *Gopinātha* temple in the centre of Raghurājpur. Three brothers of the *Tantī jāti* and the son in law of Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.) Sidhara Mahāranā own the *Gopinātha* temple. The income from the land owned by the temple covers the expenses of *Durgā pujā*. After *Durgā* left their house, the ancestors of Rāma

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60 "*Anukūl*" literally means "flowing with the bank or current" (Williams, cited by Pugh 1983:28). Here a more appropriate translation is "beginning", i.e. the beginning of work. The literal translation, however, still is very much part of the concept as the work must begin at an auspicious moment and thus must flow with rather than against the current.

61 The legend is told in slightly different versions. The one above is by Jagannātha Mahāpātra.

62 Unlike the anthropologist, the villagers could detect *Durgā's* distinctive smell during *Durgā pujā* in Raghurājpur.

Mahāranā continued to make her statue (*murtī*). However, one generation of sons did not know how to prepare the *murtī* and therefore asked Gopāla Mahāranā's (E.1.3.1.) forefathers to take over. *Durgā*, however, was annoyed and Gopāla Mahāranā's forefathers dreamt that the responsibility should be transferred to Jagannātha Mahāpātra's father.

According to Jagannātha (B.1.) the village has always celebrated the *pujā* for four days in a row in accordance with the Bengali almanac (*pānji*). Because of the extra *saptami* (the seventh day of the bright fortnight) that month the villagers had to decide whether to begin the festival on the first possible day or wait a day and hold the festival on four consecutive days[63]. If they chose the first option they would have to have a break and continue a day later. The village council decided to begin the festival the second rather than the first *saptami*.

A week before *Durgā pujā* was to commence, Jagannātha had begun the auspicious (*subha*) work of preparing the clay *murtī* assisted by his students and Lakshmana Mahāranā. While the *Durgā murtī* dried in the sun, her room was sprinkled with lime water (*chuna pāni*) in order to make it ritually pure (*shuddha*).

All the villagers worship *Durgā* in their households during *Durgā pujā* or at least at *Dasaharā* (*Āshwina sukla* 10). For the painters and especially the *Chitrakāras*, *Durgā pujā* is particularly important. *Durgā* in her form as *Mangala* is worshipped daily by the *Chitrakāra* women in their households.

63 According to Jagannātha Mahāpātra who consulted the *Kohinur pānji*, *saptami* (*Āshwina sukla* 7) began at dawn the 2nd October and lasted until the 3rd October at 6.54 am (after sunrise). If it is *saptami* at dawn the whole day will be celebrated as *saptami* in the *Jagannātha* temple and 1992 therefore had two *Āshwina* sukla 7.

During the festival, a *pujā* called *sāja basā*[64] is performed twice daily in honour of the deity.

In the late evening on *Āshwina sukla* 7, Jagannātha, his assistants, and students were very busy applying the last colours to the *murtī* before the beginning of the *murtī pujā*. Meanwhile, some painters of *Chitrakāra jāti* performed the first *sāja basā pujā* in their homes worshipping tools such as brushes (*tulī*) and coconut shells (*sadhei*) and raw materials such as tamarind (*tentuli*), glue (*athā*), colours (*ranga*), paper (*kāgaja*) and canvas (*patti*). During the next four days *pujā* was to be performed twice daily and nobody was to do any painting work[65].

While *Durgā's murtī* only has a short life she has a more permanent form in a small *patā* placed in the room next to the *Gopinātha* temple[66]. Rāma Mahāranā just managed to complete the *Durgā patā* before he and his three brothers Bharata, Lakshmana, and Shatrughna formed a procession and went to the Bhargavi river carrying earthen pots (*kumbha*). On the way they cut down a young banana palm, which is considered auspicious, and went to the place where three tributaries of the river meet. This place is *sangama*,

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64 *Sāja basā* means "sitting instruments" and refers to the instruments placed at the feet of *Durgā*. It is not only *Chitrakāras* who perform this *pujā*. The stone carver Jyotindra Das (*Baniā jāti*) called it their traditional *pujā* (*parampara pujā*). His father used to perform the *pujā* for four days. Jyotindra performs it for only one day. He considers *Vishvakarma pujā* the most important *pujā* for stone carvers and introduced it in Raghurājpur twenty years ago.

65 *Chitrakāras* as well as people of other *jātis* who earn their livelihood by painting perform this *pujā*. While some painters from Raghurājpur performed the *pujā* for four days (Dharama Mahāranā, Mukunda Mahāranā (C.1.), Kunja Mahāranā and Māguni Mahāpātra (I.2.2.1.), all of the *Chitrakāra jāti*), other households were content with performing the *pujā* on *Dasaharā* (*Āshwina sukla* 10). They said they could not afford not to work for four days but were not necessarily the poorest families. The following households performed the *sāja basā pujā* at *Dasaharā* only: Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.), Ananta Mahāpātra (I.1.1.1.), Lakshmana Mahāranā, Banamālī Mahāpātra (I.2.1.1.), Bābājī Mahāranā (F.), Bansidhara Mahāranā, Bhāgaban Mahāranā, Dīnabandhu Mahāpātra (I.2.3.1.), Kshetrabāsi Mahāranā, Gopāla Mahāranā (E.1.3.1.) (all of the *Chitrakāra jāti*), Sarat Chandra Swain (L.) and Kālucharana Bārika (K.) (the latter two of the *Chasā jāti*).

66 The *patā* is called "*pistha devī*" which means goddess on a pedestal.

which here refers to the confluence of rivers and is not only considered ritually pure (*shuddha*), but also auspicious (*subha*)[67]. The banana palm was then dipped in the river (*pāni tolā*), and the deity invited (*karā hele*) to sit in the palm. Before the procession returned to the village, a *pujā* was performed at the river bank. The banana palm transporting *Durgā* together with the earthen pots full of river water were then carried to the kitchen of *Gopinātha* temple[68].

Early the following morning, two *Brahmins* came to perform the *pujā*. While Rāma completed the eyes of the *Durgā murtī*, the *asura* and finally the *patā*, a *Brahmin* recited *mantra*, threw (auspicious) rice (*chāula*), and infused the images with "breath-life" (*prāna*)[69]. After *prāna* had been installed in the *murtī* and the *patā* six ash gourds (*pāni kakhāru*) on sticks were sacrificed in front of *Durgā*. They resembled goats and made up for the fact that *Durgā* could not be served any meat, because she stays in the temple of *Gopinātha*[70].

In a striking contrast to the seriousness with which the *Durgā pujā* was performed, people put clay *murtīs* on their verandas the following day (*Āshwina sukla* 9). The majority of the *murtīs* referred to either the *Rāmāyana* or *Krishnaleelā* but there were also other humorous and topical figures: an urinating old man (*budhā*), a police man holding a signboard

67 In Oriya and some North Indian languages, *sangama* also refers to sexual union which, like the merging of rivers, is considered auspicious (see Madan 1987:52).

68 Filled earthen pots are considered auspicious.

69 For a general description of the rites of consecration see Eck 1981:52-54.

70 *Gopinātha* is another name for *Krishna*. On the night of *astami* (*sukla* 8) *Durgā* eats fish prepared outside the temple. This night is considered extremely dangerous. The goddess (*Thākurāni*) is out and if she happens to meet a person alone she will kill her/him. However, a few villagers do not find any reason to stay in. The stone carver Jyotindra Das dismissed the possibility of danger saying it was superstition (*andhabishwās*) typical of uneducated people. Educated or not most of the villagers stay in on *astami*.

saying "*reserve bank - Bipada* (danger)"[71], and a wrestler with a signboard informing the public of the vast quantities of food he had to consume every day. It was in particular the boys and young men of the village who set up these figures, obviously enjoying the task.

On *Dasaharā* (*sukla* 10) after a *pujā* had been performed in the morning, *Durgā* left the *murtī* and returned to the banana palm, which was to be thrown in the river during the night. However, at midday, long before she had to leave for the river, the *Brahmins* performed a last *pujā* for *Durgā* and she thus had her last meal (*shesabhoga*). After that two of Raghurājpur's painter households of the *Chitrakāra* and *Chasā jātis* respectively had invited selected villagers to eat *prasāda* in their homes[72] - a courtesy which had developed a competitive character.

The *Chitrakāra* Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.) had invited people of *Chitrakāra jāti*[73] as well as his students and the anthropologist to eat *prasāda*[74]. According to one of the guests, the old *Chitrakāra* Kunja Mahāranā, a man who eats in the household of Jagannātha becomes a good craftsman, a statement which reflects the reverence Jagannātha has enjoyed (and, amongst most of the elder generation, still enjoys) in the village.

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71 This was a reference to the recent scandal surrounding Harshad Metha's Bombay stock exchange scam.

72 The *prasāda* was from their own household shrine rather than the common village shrine.

73 Among the guests were Dharama Mahāranā, Lakshmana Mahāranā, Kunja Mahāranā, Māguni Mahāpātra (I.2.2.1.) and Bābājī Mahāranā (F.). What is perhaps more interesting is that Mukunda Mahāranā (C.1.) and his son Lingarāj were not among the invited. A possible reason for this will be discussed in chapter 7.

74 In general the painters eat plain vegetarian food (*sādhā*) on *saptami* (*sukla* 7), *nabamī* (*sukla* 9) and *Dasaharā* (*sukla* 10) whereas fish, which is considered ritually polluted (*āinsa*) food is eaten on *astami* (*sukla* 8). There are, however, households that eat *āinsa* every day during Durgā pujā. Ananta Mahāranā (E.1.2.) for example said: "it is a feast after all, so why should we eat *sādhā*?".

In the household of Sarat Chandra Swain (L.) (*Chasā jāti*) he, Rabindra Mahāpātra and Lakshmidhara Mahāranā[75] served food for approximately eight or ten men none of whom were craftsmen. Both households had invited me several days before stressing that it was extremely important that I promised to come and eat in their household rather than any other households and, in what had become a familiar pattern, I ended up eating in both places.

During the day people brought food to the *Brahmins* who served it to *Durgā* and were paid *dakshinā* by the villagers for the ritual services[76]. At twilight, after the majority of the villagers had changed into new clothes, the women went to perform *bandāpanā* (circumambulation of fire) in front of *Durgā*, a way of greeting the goddess.

Amongst the *Chitrakāras* in Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi the last day in *Durgā pujā*, *Dasaharā* (*sukla* 10), is considered the most important day during the yearly cycle - it is the day when the ritual of *anukula* ("beginning" or "good beginning" as suggested by Marglin 1985) is performed. People who earn their living by using tools, for example, painters, washer men, barbers and goldsmiths begin new work on that day. The ritual of *anukula kāma* establishes a person's work identity[77]. For the farmer (*Chasā*) Kunja Swain the *pujā* of main importance during the yearly

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75 During my stay the three painters had, as mentioned in chapter 1, formed a group to produce and sell *patta* independent of their former *guru* Jagannātha Mahāpātra, one of the topics to be discussed in chapter 7.

76 *Dakshinā* is a monetary prestation paid to a *Brahmin* for his ritual service. Raheja has discussed how her informants in some instances have described the prestation of *dakshinā* as "a kind of *dān*" because inauspiciousness sometimes may be present in the *dakshinā* (1988:218). In Orissa I did not come across evidence which suggests that *dakshinā* has any inauspicious quality, nor has anybody ever suggested it could be seen as a kind of *dān*.

77 It has, until recently, only been men who have carried out the ritual but this is likely to change as more women begin to paint independently of their husbands. The woman Mamatā Behera of *Keuta jāti* from Raghurājpur decided to do *anukula* in her home. Although she earned an income as a painter (while her husband was a daily labourer) she did not go out to paint at the temple walls in the village as she feared it might have aroused the anger of some of the men of the village.

ritual cycle had always been the one held at *Shrābana sukla* 15 (*Balabhadra janma, Rakhi purnimā*) where cows are worshipped. However, his son Sarat Chandra Swain (L.), who made a living as a painter, celebrated *Dasaharā* rather than *Shrābana sukla* 15.

In Jagannātha Mahāpātra's (B.1.) house, at *Dasaharā*, there was great excitement. In the days prior to this final day in *Durgā pujā* Jagannātha had spent not less than Rs. 9000 on new clothes for his kith and kin, students and people working for him. On *Dasaharā* his daughters, their husbands and children and his adopted daughter came to celebrate. His brother's son Sudarshana and the students (of different *jātis*) were getting ready to go to perform the ritual of *anukula*, that is paint auspicious signs on the temple walls of the village. When I asked Jagannātha what time the specific auspicious moment (*amruta belā* or *subha belā*) would begin, Jagannātha consulted his almanac (*pānji*) a second time, said it was six p.m. and told the young men to hurry up[78]. However, I was not convinced and told Jagannātha that I thought it was wrong[79]. Jagannātha was sceptical but consulted the *pānji* again and realised that *amruta belā* would not begin until 8.01 p.m. He immediately ordered the students to postpone *anukula* by another two hours.

After *anukula* had been performed, the *murtī* which had earlier embodied *Durgā* was taken on a visit to *Bhuāsunī* (the village goddess) and the

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78 Jagannātha used the Kohinur *pānji*, published by Cuttack Kohinur press. This *pānji* is based on the movement of the sun in Puri and considered the most precise. It is used by the *Mukti Mandapa Brahmins* in the temple of *Jagannātha*. According to the *pānji*, there were six distinct auspicious periods for doing anukula throughout *Āshwina sukla* 10:

1: dawn till 6.50 a.m.
2: 7.42 - 11.36 a.m.
3: 8.01 - 9.08 p.m.
4: 9.57 - 12.24 p.m.
5: 2.43 - 4.32 a.m
6: 5.21 - 6.12 a.m.

79 Some might find it problematic that I chose to interfere to that extent. I, however, believe that such moments, which establish that an anthropologist can be more than a painful series of never ending questions, are essential for the relationships on which fieldwork depends.

households in the northern lane of the village. The *Durgā murtī* was not taken to the southern lane where Rāma Mahāranā's house is situated[80]. The procession then went to the river where the *murtī* was immersed and thus cooled and *Durgā* left the banana palm for the river.

Anukula Kāma in Dānda Sāhi

In Dānda Sāhi *anukula* was performed in the morning on *Dasaharā*. Three days earlier, on *Āshwina sukla* 7, Arjunā Mahāranā (E.2.1.) had set up his small working desk[81], the stones (*jhunā baradā*) with which the *patti* is smoothed, a pair of scissors (*kainchi*), rulers (*gaja*), coconut shells (*sadhei*), brushes (*tulī*), two new *pattis* and a cup containing the five nectars (*panchāmrutas*)[82] for the *sāja basā pujā* (described above) (see figure 60). On top of it all was a tiny, roughly made *Durgā patta*[83]). After Arjunā's son had completed the eyes of *Durgā*, nobody was to touch her so as not to pollute[84].

A *Brahmin* came every morning and evening to perform *pujā* for *Durgā* during the four days of celebration. After the performance of the last *pujā*,

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80 It was this house that *Durgā* is supposed to have sworn never to face again after she had left it for the *Gopinātha* temple.

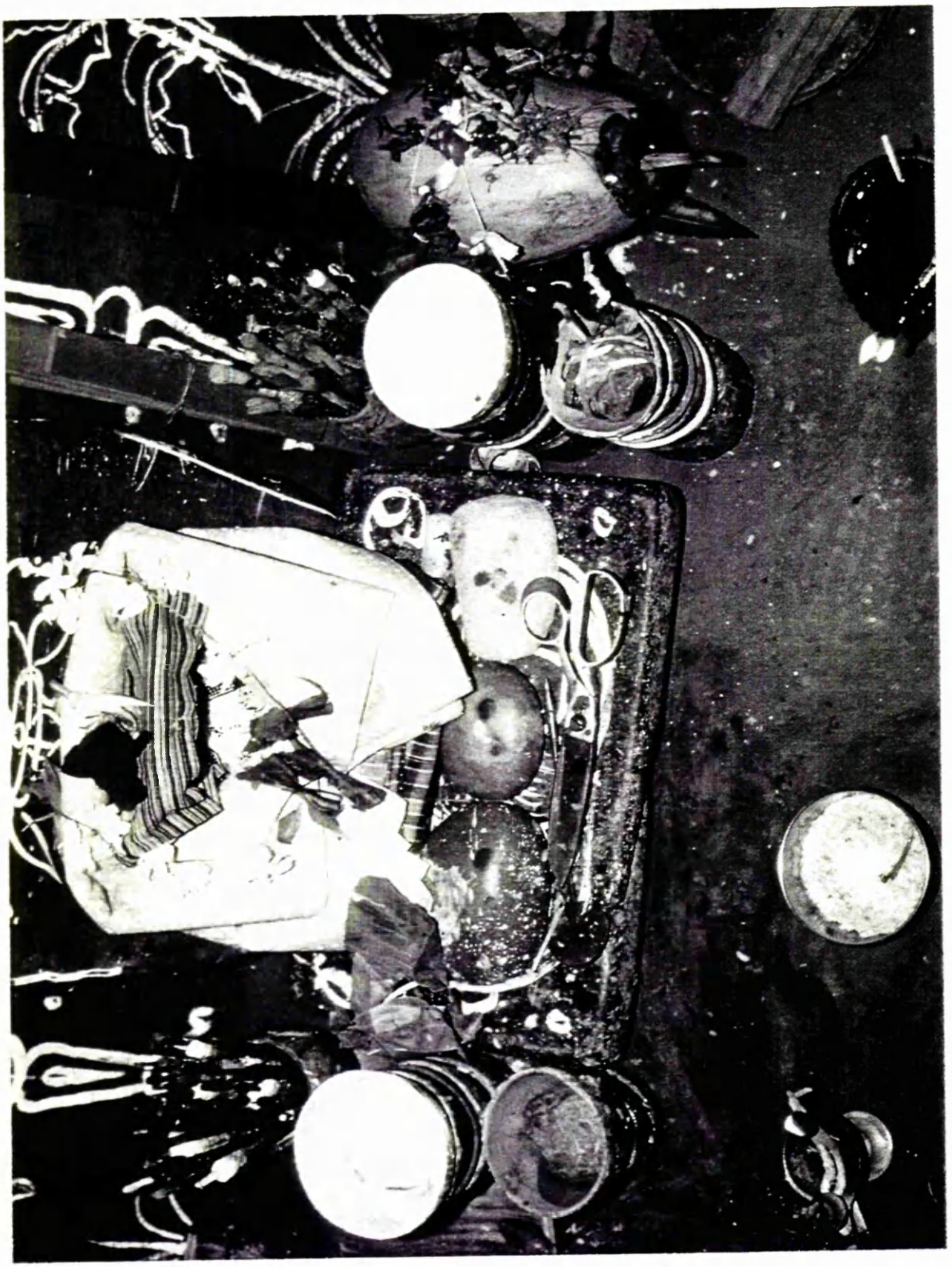
81 When making small *pattas* the painters tend to work on a little slightly tilted table.

82 The five nectars which are considered *suddha* (ritually clean) were *dahi* (curd), *dudha* (colloquial term for milk), *mahu* (honey), *ghee* (clarified butter) and *guda* (molasses).

83 In Dānda Sāhi *Durgā pujā* is only performed in the households of painters. They call it *patta pujā*, whereas the common *pujā* in Raghurājpur is called *murtī pujā*. In Raghurājpur the painters did not have a *Durgā patta* on top of their instruments.

84 The youngest son was constantly reminded by the women of the household who shouted "*chhuani*" (do not touch, otherwise it will become polluted).

Figure 60: *Sāja basā pujā* in Arjunā Mahāranā's house, Dānda Sāhi 1992.



Arjunā changed into a new *dhoti* made of *tassar* (*mathā*)[85]. He then began the ritual of *anukula*[86], painting different auspicious signs such as a conch (*sankha*) or an earthen pot (*kumbha*) covered by a coconut surrounded by two fish on the wall of the room facing the lane. On the outer wall below the wall painting of *Nrusingha*, Arjunā painted conch shells (*sankha*). Arjunā told his eldest son, his cousin Nrusingha Mahāranā (E.1.1.) and his sons living next door to hurry up because *amruta belā* was about to end[87]. That did not bother Nrusingha who loathed rushing, but finally they went to paint *sankhas* on the temple walls of the village. They were followed by Arjunā's youngest son who was supposed to greet all the elders he met on the way and distribute *prasāda*. The fact that Nrusingha and Arjunā were neighbours played a more important role than kin relations. They are cousins and therefore belong to the same *kutumba* but not the same *ghara* (house)[88]. Arjunā's brother Krishna later went to do *anukula* on his own and so did Nrusingha's brother, Ananta.

On their way back, Arjunā and Nrusingha met Braraju Mahāranā (N.1.) who was on his way to paint with his youngest son. This was after *amruta belā*. Baraju did not consider it necessary to consult a *pānji* because, according

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85 Ananta Mahāpātra (I.1.1.1.) (Raghurājpur) only painted auspicious signs below the goddess *Mangala* in their house. He did not find it appropriate to paint on the temple walls because he did not have any new clothes.

86 Arjunā began at 11.05, three minutes before *amruta belā* ended for that part of the day, according to the Khadiratna *pānji*, he had consulted the day before. The Khadiratna *pānji* is not considered as reliable as the Kohinur *pānji*. However, that does not cause concern. According to the Khadiratna *pānji*, the auspicious time (*subha belā*) to do *anukula* on *Āshwina sukla* 10 was as follows:

1: dawn till 6.27 a.m.
2: 7.13 - 11.08 a.m.
3: 7.50 - 8.39 p.m.
4: 9.28 - 11.56 p.m.
5: 1.34 - 3.12 a.m.

87 It would probably not have happened if Arjunā and I had not discussed *subha belā* the day before. Arjunā did not think that it would be possible to finish bathing and performing the last *pujā*, within four hours (7.13 - 11.08 am). However, he did not consider this a problem.

88 Although two brothers do not live in the same house they nevertheless belong to the same *ghara* - the house of their father.

to him, the whole day was auspicious and it did not, therefore, matter precisely when he commenced painting. Arjunā and Nrusingha objected, and Arjunā stressed that only specific moments of the day would be auspicious for certain tasks. Baraju's father Gunu interrupted saying that although he never considers *amruta belā* when painting a *murtī* for *pujā*, it ought to be done to ensure a good result. He then illustrated his point describing how thirty years ago, when a customer had ordered a *Durgā murtī* begun at an auspicious moment, Gunu had consulted an astrologer to inquire about *amruta belā*. The result was, according to Gunu, that his *Durgā* was the most beautiful of the *Durgā murtīs* made that year.

Arjunā and Nrusingha's protest indicates that auspiciousness is not considered an abstract and independent quality, but acquires its meaning in the very specific contexts in which it appears. It does not have an essential characteristic. As Pugh has shown, auspiciousness or auspicious events can take place only "when actions flow with the times which are appropriate to their purposes" (1983:48). "Auspiciousness", says Pugh, "is not an abstract quality of well-being whose meaning and expressions can be specified outside a given context of activity" (ibid.:48). On the contrary it is intrinsically linked to time and space, and manifesting itself as a quality of events taking place in the lives of human actors (Madan 1987:58).

The time had now come to make *anukula patta*, a work which is considered auspicious. Arjunā and his son each took one of the plain canvasses (*pattis*) which (together with other materials and tools) had been part of the *sāja basā pujā* and sat down to make a sketch. Arjunā made a sketch for *Akrura ratha* (this motif is illustrated in chapter 3, figures 15,44,45,45a)[89].

89 Until the two *pattas* were sold, the household would not eat burnt (*podā*) food as it is considered inauspicious (*asubha*) to eat such food on certain occasions such as *pujā, Sankrānti*, and in the periods after birth and death in which a household is considered polluted.

Nrusingha's son did not have a new *patti* for *anukula* and made a sketch for one of the illustrations on a *patta* he had begun to make some days earlier. According to Arjunā that was not the proper way to do *anukula patta* since it was essential that a new work be commenced and he suggested that this mistake might affect the prosperity of Nrusingha's household during the coming year. Later that afternoon one of the boys in Arjunā's household took the *Durgā patta*, which had been worshipped in the *sāja basā pujā*, to the river where it was immersed[90].

The *Durgā pattas* worshipped in Dānda Sāhi were characterised by their rough appearance[91]. They were made by the sons of the households, who spent as little time as possible performing the task. However, they had been careful to make sure that their depiction of *Durgā* carried the appropriate weapons (*astras*) and her anger therefore would not be aroused.

Deities and their Anger

The *Durgā pattas* (which had appropriate weapons but rough lines) are an example of the hierarchy of priorities that painters follow when they execute images for worship. First of all, it is essential that the deities in question - in particular the fierce ones - are depicted with her/his appropriate weapons. Secondly, the body must be well proportioned. Things such as the fineness of lines and the decoration are considered to be less important to the deity and consequently have a lower priority among the craftsmen. The painters' job is to take care to replicate correctly already existing models when making paintings for worship (cf. page 259 in this chapter).

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90 The *patta* made for worship was thus "dismissed" by being submerged in the river in the same manner as the *Durgā murtī* had been.

91 that is thick lines drawn by a relatively inexperienced painter or a careless experienced painter.

As we shall see in chapter 5 (page 317), this relation is almost reversed when painters make commercial paintings. Here lines and minute decoration have first priority, whereas appropriate weapons are not considered important. In other words style has a priority over attributes when painting for the tourist market, whereas attributes are considered most important when making religious paintings. This inversion underscores the kind of process (ritual or exclusively commercial) undertaken by painters[92].

Precise replication is crucial when painting images for worship. That this was so was made apparent when one of Jagannātha Mahāpātra's (B.1.) apprentices Tophāna Mahāranā told of his brother's experience with the goddess *Sankata* who lives in Harachandi Sāhi, Puri.

One must bathe and fast before going to paint a deity. Tophāna's brother, however, had eaten watered rice (*pakhāla*), fried garlic, burnt eggplant and potatoes mixed with garlic before he went to paint *Sankata*. He forgot to paint one of her toes and with breath smelling of garlic, made her eyes of different size.

When he came home he suffered from fever and no medicine could help him. He was ill for three or four days babbling and gnashing his teeth. His father tried to raise him from this state and slapped him and spat on his face. Then, suddenly his son began to speak.

> "How dare you spit on me? You beat me! I will not stay any more, I will go. You made me blind and one of my toes short. I won't stay here any more. Make room for me, I will go".

Tophāna's father then asked who was speaking and his son said:

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92 Williams notes that "iconographic 'correctness' did not affect the judgment of quality" (1988:11) and "..in comparing details of iconography among the second group of pictures, all the artists weighed them less heavily than exclusively visual qualities" (ibid.:13). These findings reflect a failure to distinguish between paintings made for tourist consumption on the one hand and ritual purposes on the other.

> "You don't understand, you still have doubt? He gave me eyes after he had eaten garlic[93]. Then he made one of my legs lame, a toe is missing. That is why I came with anger and then you spit on me. I will not stay".

The household took great pains to lessen the anger of the deity giving her a kind of fruit lassi (*panā*) and burning incense (*dhupa*). Despite this Tophāna's brother fell unconscious and was not cured until the following day.

Tophāna continued to tell how he had been scared ever since his brother was possessed:

> "Whenever I go to paint I never feel proud (*garba kareni*). I think of one thing only: he/she should be whatever he/she wishes to be (*tānkara jāhā ichhā se seia huāntu*). I leave it to the deity (*tānka upare chhādi die*). I completely surrender myself (*samarpana karidie*) and only use my hand. Even if I commit a mistake I will not get in trouble. When painting a *patā* made for worship, I always think like this no matter where I have to go".

Another story told by a painter household in Dānda Sāhi indicates the reverence with which a painter approaches his work especially when he has to create the image of one of the fierce deities.

While preparing the *Kālī māti murtī* for *Kālī pujā* (*Kārtika krusna* 15), Baraju Mahāranā (N.1.) related how his household had taken over the work for the *Shāsana Brahmin* village Biragobindapur after the death of the *Chitrakāra* who had previously been making the *murtī*. The night following the completion of *Kālī*, this *Chitrakāra* had been visited by the goddess. He began to throw things all over the place and his relatives called the *Brahmin* who was responsible for Kālī's worship.

The deity then complained (through the possessed *Chitrakāra*) that she had not been able to eat the sacrificed goats because the craftsman had made

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93 It is a standard *Brahmanic* custom to avoid garlic which is said to have a heating quality and is classified as *rājasik*. By contrast *sātvika* foods (vegetarian dishes without any oil, spices or garlic) are thought to have a cooling quality. For a discussion of the qualities of *rajas* and *sattva* see Inden (1985:144-155).

her eyes and hands too small. She had therefore decided to eat him and he died the following day. The *Brahmins* of Biragobindapur then decided to ask Baraju's household to make the deity.

According to Baraju it is extremely important to present *Kālī's* gestures correctly, that is with the appropriate hands[94]. Baraju, however, did not consider this a problem because she only has four arms. He found it much more difficult to make *Durgā* in her ten handed appearance.

Even if painters fear the anger of deities there is a limit to how much they will tolerate. The painters serve the deities by painting them, and expect to be treated justly. For the last twenty five years Dharama Mahāranā from Raghurājpur went to the neighbouring village of Gadi Sāhi to paint *Nrusingha* on his birthday (*Baishākha, sukla* 13) (see figure 61). He took over the work for the *Brahmin* household from his father and thus continued the patron-client relationship.

In the spring of 1992 Dharama decided he would not paint *Nrusingha* on his coming birthday (*Baishākha sukla* 14). The deity had not been fair to let him suffer so much after Dharama had painted his image for so many years. For three years Dharama had been involved with arranging his eldest daughter Sulā's marriage and had aged because of the worry caused by the groom's family who demanded continuously increasing the dowry. As soon as he had made that decision, Sula's marriage was fixed. The deity, it was concluded, had clearly not wanted anyone else to paint his image. Grateful to *Nrusingha*, Dharama went to paint him when the time came in the month of *Baishākha*.

94 According to Baraju *Kālī* blesses with her right, vertical hand, holds her sword with the left, eats with her right, horizontal hand, and holds the heads of demons with her left.

Figure 61: *Nrusingha* wall painting painted by Dharama Mahāranā in the home of his *Brahmin* patron (Gadi Sāhi, 1992).

Conclusion

We have seen how two *sebakas* and their households differ considerably in their attitude towards the making of *anasara pattis*, one of the *sebā* tasks in the yearly cycle. While one household took great pride in the work and turned the occasion into a celebration, the other simply carried out the work as quickly as possible resulting in a much rougher depiction of the deity. This second household depended entirely upon the income gained from the *sebā* work and it is consequently not surprising that a task such as the making of *anasara patti*, which involves expense more than income is not talked about with joy. The other household earns its living making signboards, crafts and paintings for tourists and can therefore afford to celebrate the social and religious significance of making the *anasara pattis*.

It is not possible to make any generalised statement about the *Chitrakāras*' conception of the patron-client relationships in which they are involved. For the majority of painters, the work they do for their *Brahmin* patrons is simply a way of earning an income and several choose to leave it if they can think of another way of earning their livelihood. There is no prestige attached to this work, on the contrary some painters experience it as humiliating and Master Craftsmen in general consider it below their dignity. A few painters however, comment that, what is mainly inherited, work for temples and *Brahmin* patrons result in the acquisition of merit. They conceive the work as the fulfilment of their *dharma*.

Painters do not only paint to serve the needs of others or to make money. The making of the *Durgā murtī* in the village of Raghurājpur was mainly for the painters' benefit, but also for the other villagers. The ritual of *anukula* was an undertaking concerned with a painters' work identity and the prospect of a successful working year to come. *Anukula* is the only ritual in the yearly cycle in which the painters take trouble to consult an

almanac (or ask somebody who has so done) to establish the appropriate auspicious moment for carrying out the ritual. However, having determined the appropriate moment, the majority of painters are not in practice very precise in timing of their work and some may even begin *anukula* after the auspicious time interval has finished.

When painting for religious purposes, painters take care not to make any mistakes in the depiction of the iconographic attributes of the deities, particularly when painting the fiercer ones. In this ritual context we have a complete inversion of the practices which characterise the paintings made for the tourist market where minute details and decoration are considered more important than the correct depiction of the attributes of a deity.

I will now turn to those paintings produced for tourist consumption, focusing on the painters' conceptions.

Chapter 5

Painters' Aesthetic Discourses

This chapter is concerned with *patta* painters' discourses on paintings[1]. The first section of this chapter focuses on painters' comments upon *patta* paintings. In contrast, the second part is based upon painters' responses to and their use of European oil painting and Indian calendar art. As we will discover in chapter 6, it is, in particular, the use of calendar art as a source of acceptable inspiration which distinguishes the painters' perceptions from those of art specialists.

In contrast to the paintings made for religious purposes (discussed in the previous chapter), the *patta* paintings discussed here are made for tourist consumption and are consequently detached from the yearly cycle and related significance. These are produced throughout the year, with output dropping during the rainy season, when the number of tourists is low[2].

In this chapter, I argue that painters value representations in terms of, among other things, their adherence to ideal pre-existing images. Evaluations are expressed in a detailed descriptive language concerned with the qualities of a painting and its assessment within a paradigm of correspondence. Most painters introduce elements from other visual fields, if these features are thought to contribute to the beauty of a painting. Some painters might, however, describe such inclusions as incompatible with the tradition of *patta* painting.

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1 Taped interviews with painters have added to the information acquired by participant observation. The interviews concerned ten *pattas* (made by different painters at different stages of learning and based in Raghurājpur, Dānda Sāhi and Puri) and took place at the four places where fieldwork was conducted. When no other reference is given quotes are taken from painters' discussions with the author.

2 For examples of tourists' comments upon these paintings see appendix 1.

Section I

Painters' Perceptions of *Patta* Paintings

During my fieldwork I encountered an unwillingness or inability on the part of the painters to articulate "meanings" in a narrow hermeneutic sense. Therefore most of the information I acquired concerned the names of specific mythological characters, objects, designs, or steps in the process of making a *patta.* Even if the identification of certain figures as mythological figures does indeed connect a painting to the cosmology of the culture, it does not provide a means of understanding the paintings in an ultimate sense. Names are, as Forge discusses, peculiarly intractable sources of information which do not indicate "meaning" at all, but are merely a set of referential labels (Forge 1979:279).

Questions such as "why is light red (*hingula*) preferable to white as a background colour?", "Why does *Ganesh* hold his second left hand like this?", or "Why must the background be decorated with petals and dots (*sankhapatā*)?" invariably resulted in the ancestrally sanctioned response: "Our forefathers did it like this - it is our tradition (*parampara*)".

The main part of this chapter consists of painters' responses to my enquiries on their opinions of specific paintings. The questions were always open ended, the most common example being "What is your opinion (*mata kana*) of this painting?". However, this is a very artificial situation, the painters are not usually asked questions of this kind. It is the classical problem of theoretical questions clashing with practice - such questions will necessarily be unanswerable (Bourdieu 1990:82-83, 91). When asked, painters would search their minds to produce answers they thought I - the interrogator -

might want. Their answers should, therefore, not be read as if they are transparent and unproblematic[3].

In their discussions of Pacific art forms Forge and O'Hanlon raise the problem of justifying analytical understandings in the light of thin local discourse (Forge 1979, O'Hanlon 1993). Forge argues that the reason that people in some parts of the world have very little to say about their works of art is that they communicate significant messages at a non-verbal level. According to Forge, it is the structure of the art form which should be analyzed in order to disclose its message and significance to the culture as a whole.

This approach, in which a search for meaning takes place on a systematic level, presents several problems. It does not, for example, take into account that people may be reluctant to interpret the "meaning" of their art, but are quite happy to talk about its significance[4]. O'Hanlon criticises Forge, arguing that we have wrongly presupposed that an absence of exegesis on art forms is the same as an absence of verbalisation[5]. As we shall see in this chapter, the painters do indeed comment upon and talk about their paintings - not merely as the result of the presence of an anthropologist[6].

The *patta* painters assess the paintings, discussing whether, for instance, the pose (*bhangi*), proportions (*bhāgamāpa*) and colours for instance (in conventional art history known as style) are appropriate, or whether a deity

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3 All answers I have chosen to present have been in accordance with my observations of painters' comments to their students when guiding them in their work (more or less independently of my presence).

4 I have inverted Hirsch's distinction between "meaning" - based on the original intention of an author or painter in producing something - and the "significance" later attributed to that object by others (or even the author/painter him/herself) in different contexts (1967).

5 Forge's and O'Hanlon's viewpoints are further discussed in the conclusion.

6 Williams notes that "the oral statements of some [Chitrakāras] were articulate and discerning" (1988:15).

carries the correct weapons (*astras*) in the appropriate hand (known as iconography in the language of art history[7]). Furthermore, they remark upon the quality of the lines, patterns, and the colours chosen.

The table below shows some common expressions of *patta* painters' evaluation. Where possible, I have noted other contexts in which these expressions are used.

Table 6

Expressions used about Paintings

Derogative expressions:

***Bāje*:**

Nihāti bāje kāma (very bad work),
bāje kathā kahanā (do not talk rubbish).

***Phāltu*:**

Seitā khāli phāltu kāma kare (he does only useless work),
Phāltu gapare samaya nasta karani (do not waste time in useless talk).

Negative loaded expressions:

***Āburu jāburu*[8]:**

E chitra tā bahut āburu jāburu hei jāichhi (that painting is messed up/too much).

***Chālu*:**

Se khāli chālu kāma kare (he makes only the kind of work which is sold in the everyday market),
Gote chālu chā dela (give me an everyday tea),
Egudāka sabu chālu jinisha (these are all ordinary things).

***Sadhāraniā*:**

Tā kāma sabu sādhāraniā kāma (his work is common work),
Se dekhibāku semiti sādhārania (he is nothing much to look at).

***Gote prakara*:**

E kāmata gote prakāra (this work is not bad).
How was the film? *Han, gote prakāra* (well, not bad).

Positive loaded expressions:

***"Solid"*:**

Eh, "solid" kāma heichi (oh, it is a very good [sumptuous] work),

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7 The painters themselves do not separate their paintings into style, form or content. When analytically useful I have chosen to invoke these master categories from Western art history.

8 The painters often use adjacent words for their effect. In most cases the first consonant is replaced by a f. Examples:
gachha - fachha (tree)
ranga - fanga (colour)
ānguthi - fānguthi (finger).

Tānka ghare kāli "solid" khāibāte heithilā (yesterday in their house we had a very good [sumptuous] meal).

Sundara:

Tā hāta kāma sundara (his workmanship is beautiful),
Tā "dress" tā bahut sundara heichi (her dress is beautiful).

Badhiā:

Badhiā kāma pāin badhiā paisā darkār (good work [paintings] requires good money).

"***Class***":

Tā kāma "class" kāma (his work is excellent),
Se gote "class" ghara karichi (he has built a "class" house).

Bārik:

Tāra pura bārik kāma (his work is absolutely splendid),
kāli mo sānga ghare gote bārik khiri karithile (yesterday in my friend's house they made an absolutely splendid rice pudding).

Sarsā:

Eitā sarsā kāma heichi (it is extraordinary work),
Oh, sarsā toki ti (oh, what a girl).

Khāss:

Eitā khāss kāma nuhen (it is not a special work).
Se "chief ministernkara" jane khāss loka (he is a special [central] man to the Chief minister). (In relation to painting *"khāss"* is mainly used with a negation. It could, therefore, be argued that the term should have been categorised under negative loaded expressions).

Although there is a local term *kalā*, which in common with other north Indian languages, denotes art, it is not widely used. It was offered in response to my questions but does not form part of this evaluative framework described in table 5. A couple of painters, Binod Mahāranā (G.) and Bijoy Kumar Parida (H.), insisted on demarcating themselves as artists (*kalāgara*) rather than craftsmen (*kārigara*) but for most painters this was simply not an issue[9].

9 According to Binod some art specialists, participating in a seminar at the B.K. Art College in Bhubaneshwar, had once agreed that *patta* painters are *kārigara* rather than kalāgara. After the seminar Binod had been determined to show them that he is a *kalāgara* and painted a *patta* "using his head" rather than "only his hands" (as far as Binod is concerned this distinguishes a *kalāgara* from a *kārigara*). It is likely that Binod would never have given this classification any thought had it not been for the art specialists' discussion.

The *Patta* Painter as Producer of Existing Divine Models

The late Arjunā Mahāranā (E.2.1.) (Dānda Sāhi) was talking about Jagannātha Māhāpātra's (B.1.) (Raghurājpur) book of *slokas* illustrated with sketches, and mentioned that if a painting is ordered from the book it will be made according to the *dhyāna*[10]:

> "The book has everything about the colour necessary, the weapons needed for the hands and other things too. If a painting is done according to the *sloka* then it is thought to be worthy of god (*thākurā jogya*, fit for god). What ever we do, whether dresses, body colour or weapons, it should be absolutely right. It is the rule (*niyama*) that paintings should be made according to the *sloka*"[11].

Arjunā continued:

> "The first thing to know about *patta* is how to make it [the canvas], then the colour and finally the *composition*[12]. If these things are not done correctly, the work will not be good".

Arjunā had just come back from one of his trips to Delhi[13] and the other painters from the village had come to see whether he had managed to sell their paintings. Arjunā was telling me about the characteristics of *pattas* and the other painters joined in[14]. They all agreed that the thin black lines

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10 the visualisation of a particular aspect of the divinity, which is described in a *sloka* and represented iconographically.

11 According to Arjunā, the painters when painting for commercial purposes do not care about this rule and just paint whatever comes to mind. This is in accordance with what I have observed.

12 The painters often use the English word composition. The sense is proportion, in Oriya known as *bhāgamāpa*.

13 Arjunā had been registered at the National Handicrafts and Handlooms Museum in Delhi and had gone there several times either to work for a month or in connection with visits abroad arranged by the Museum. The purpose of the visits to the Museum is discussed in chapter 6.

14 The painters were not all present at the same time. They dropped by during the forenoon. Among the visitors were Krushna Mahāranā; Nrusingha Mahāranā (E.1.1.) and his son; Ananta Mahāranā (E.1.2.); and Biranchi Das (M.) (of *Chasā jāti*).

(*saru kalā*), which frame figures and are one of the final steps in making a *patta* are essential (darkār, or necessary was the expression most commonly used).

The making of *saru kalā* indicates the skill of a craftsman. According to the painters, the pose (*bhangi*) is another very important part of a painting determined already in the sketch (tipanā). Proportions (*bhāgamāpa*) must be made in accordance with body proportions in general.

There are no fixed rules concerning measurements, but a rather loose guideline: The length from the top of the head to the navel should equal the length from the navel to the feet. Also the formally recognized iconographic codes from the *sāstras* were mentioned as characteristics that define a *patta*[15]. Has *Visnu*, for example, in his incarnation as *Rāma* been painted with the appropriate colour and does he carry his bow[16]?

It is these characteristics which a painter first notices when looking at a *patta*. Hari Mahāranā (A.2.) (Puri) described what he does when he considers the quality of a *patta*:

> "A painting must be studied carefully to know whether it is good or not. Which things are put where? In which position is the hand kept? Which are the actual things (*prakruta jinisa*) which should be held? Which hand should hold what? Has the deity been painted the correct colour?"

This type of consideration seemed to be the basis of most evaluations of *patta* paintings. When asked to comment on a *patta*, depicting *Ganesh*

15 *Sāstra* denotes a text which deals with rules and regulations, in this case, of paintings.

16 The painters did not use abstract terms such as iconography but simply stated examples indicating their opinion.

(figure 62), three painters independently noticed the lack of a tooth[17]. Ananta Mahāranā (E.1.2.) (Dānda Sāhi) said:

> "This is dancing *Ganesh* (*nātangi Ganesh*). He holds an axe (*phārsā*), he holds a sweet (*ladu*) and a rosary (*japa*) is also present, but there is no tooth in his hand. The craftsman has made a mistake (*bhul karijāichi kārigara*)".

Some days later Arjunā Mahāranā (E.2.1.) commented on the same *patta*:

> "A tooth which should have been here has not been made. That means that the work has been completed too quickly (*tarabariā kāma*)".

Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.) liked the painting in general, but noted:

> "The pose is beautiful (*bhangi sundara heichhi*) but the gesture (*mudrā*) is wrong. Our *Ganesh* keeps a tooth but there is no tooth in the hand, the hand makes a gesture".

Ananta's brother Nrusingha Mahāranā (E.1.1.) (Dānda Sāhi) didn't remark on the missing tooth, but mentioned other things which in his eyes were lacking:

> "Dots (*Topi marā*) are not there, moreover a border (*dhadi bhidā*) has not been made, the nails have not been painted white. Everything else is fine".

This suggests that the painters have a mental set of conventions to which they refer when looking at a *patta* painting. They look at the details in the painting in order to know whether the painting as a whole conforms to existing conventions.

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17 The painters explained why *Ganesh* is supposed to keep a tooth in his hand by referring to two legends. The one most commonly told is the following: *Siva* set a test for his two sons *Kartikesvara* and *Ganesh*. They were supposed to travel around the world a couple of times as fast as possible and the winner would get a sweet. *Kartikesvara* flew away on his peacock, whereas *Ganesh* went on his rat. *Ganesh* circled the earth twice and claimed the sweet. When *Kartikesvara* came back *Ganesh* had already eaten the sweet. The older brother *Kartikesvara* got angry and hit *Ganesh* who broke his tooth. According to the other legend, the elephant *Airābata* was supposed to resist the flow of the water when *Bhāgirathi* went to fetch *Ganga*. *Airābata* tried to resist the water but eventually his tooth broke under pressure. All elephants are his descendants, and therefore have a broken tooth.

Figure 62: Nātangi Ganesh

Binod Mahāranā (G.) from Bhubaneshwar who taught palm leaf engraving at the Training Centre and was acknowledged as the best contemporary *patta* painter by the *patta* painters in Puri district, as well as the local art specialist did not go into details about the *Ganesh* painting, but said:

> "The *drawing* and the pose (*bhangi*) has become too much. It is *chālu kāma*".

Binod's criticism must, of course, be seen in relation to his skill as a painter. More importantly, however, he lived and taught in Bhubaneshwar and was familiar with the current debate among local art specialists about what was perceived as the problem of an excessive business orientation among craftsmen of Raghurājpur. The interaction between members of different worlds within the *patta* art world lead to an exchange of ideas and thus mutually influenced existing conceptions.

When asked what he thought of the craftsmanship of a *patta* depicting *Kālī* dancing on *Siva* (figure 63), Ananta Mahāranā (E.1.2.) said:

> "All of the hand work is fine (*sabu thik achhi*). The shape of the figure is all right, *Mahā-deva* is fine and the face of the king is also fine. *Kālī* holds one head, everything is fine".

The local *patta* dealer Bānāmbara Nāyaka[18] (Raghurājpur) commented on the same *patta* in a similar manner:

> "It is light red (*hingula*) work. The background colour *hingula* has been decorated with intricate work (*kārukārjya*). Ornaments have been painted, *Kālī* is presented in a standing pose, the depiction of flowers is well done. There are no faults to be found (*ethire khunibāku kichhi nāhin*) it is good".

He went on to talk about a *patta* depicting *Rādhākrishna* and two *gopis* (figure 64):

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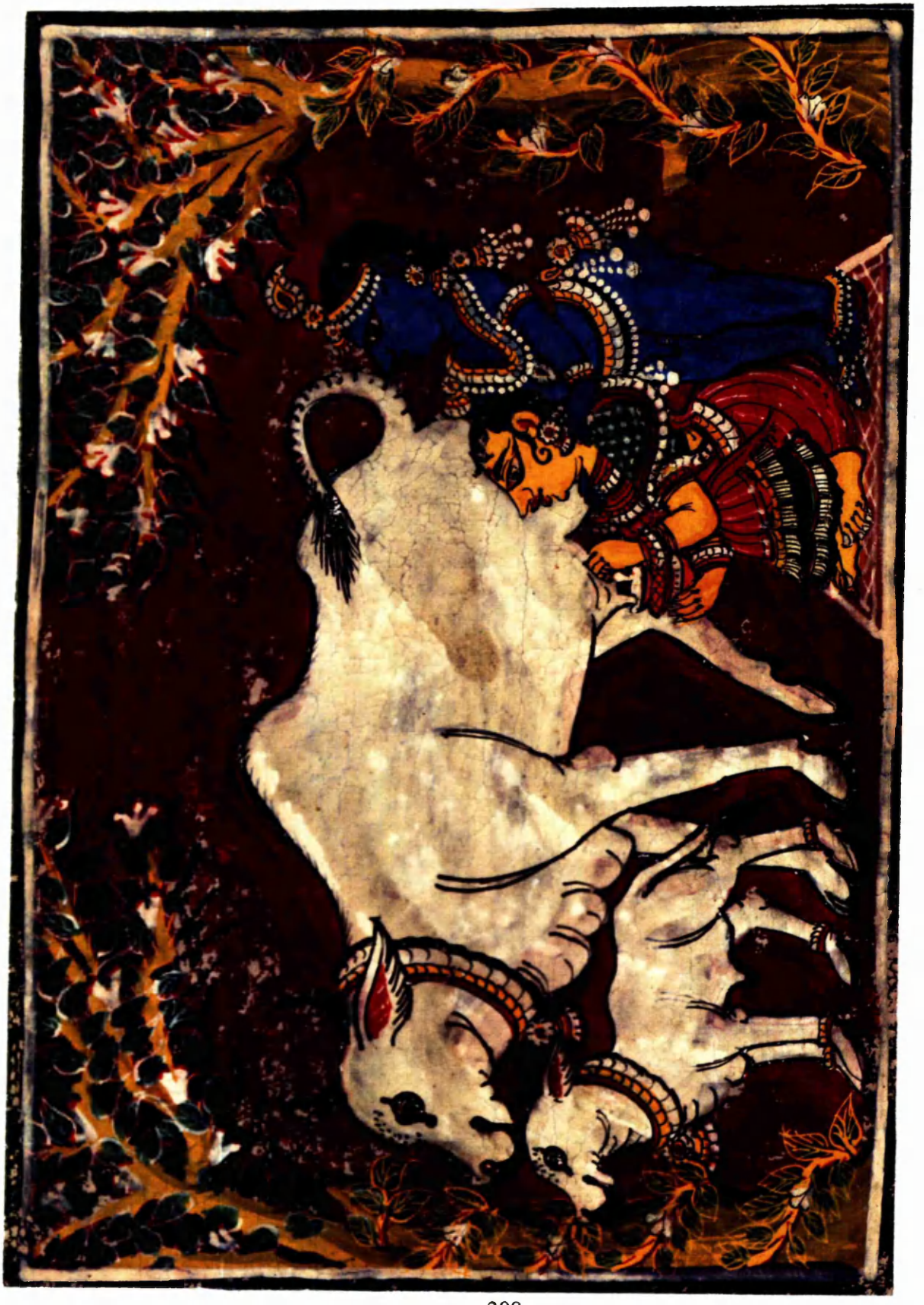
18 I have included the dealer's comment, although he is not a painter. Due to his close contact with the painters of his village, Bānāmbara Nāyaka speaks about and evaluates *pattas* in much the same manner as the painters.

Figure 63: *Kālī* dancing on *Siva*.

"...everything is where it is supposed to be. Which ornaments should be given to whom, who should be painted with which dress - it has all been presented correctly".

Figure 64: *Rādhākrishna* and two *gopis*.

Figure 65: *Krishna*, *Jashodā*, a cow and a calf.



It is important to paint the proper figures and items, but equally important to paint exact, fine lines. Dīnabandhu Mahāpātra (I.2.3.1.) (Raghurājpur) who taught at the Training Centre in Bhubaneshwar, found reason to criticise the lines of the *patta* depicting *Krishna, Jashodā*, a cow and a calf (figure 65):

> "Look how thick all the lines are drawn. They don't have any stability (*sthāitwa*) or *force*. It looks like the work of a child".

Nārāyana Mahāranā (C.1.-s-i-l.) commented on the same painting:

> "It is of course made by a trainee (*nuā pilā*). But the painting is good, it is not bad. Because he is a beginner his lines go from one side to another (*tikie epata sepata*) but otherwise the work is good".

The examples suggest that the painters' comments on *pattas*, on the one hand concern the degree to which a painting can be said to replicate already existing divine images or models and, on the other are concerned with the technical skill with which a painting has been executed. Interpretation of "meaning" does not take place and is certainly not part of the ordinary process of evaluation.

The evaluations are articulated with an apparently utilitarian language which concerns quantification, accuracy and formality. The latter two qualities, in particular, are concerned with the iconography of a painting. The iconographic evaluation entails an assessment of the success or otherwise of a transcription of already existing patterns, thought to be the most complete depictions possible of a given deity. This suggests an ideology which stresses replication rather than innovation: the painter is expected to execute pre-existing divinely sanctioned models. A painter's point of reference is thus, to some extent, to be found in a pre-existing representation and his work can, in part, be seen as an expression of fidelity.

However, particularly when painting for tourist consumption, the painters occasionally engage in developing new patterns and designs. It would therefore be a simplification to see the painters' connection with divine forces as a parallel to that described by Parry for the Benares Brahmins and the Brahmanical tradition. According to Parry, the textual tradition is accorded an ideological immunity to sceptical scrutiny (1985:205). One of the characteristics of tourist oriented production is that it is more or less stripped of its religious significance. This allows the painters to go beyond the conventions of paintings made for religious consumption.

This is not necessarily understood to be a realm of great "freedom" - a term which is essentially modernist. Layton has argued that creativity is a necessary part of the sustenance of all art traditions (1991:193-239). According to him, artists will always try to innovate, manipulate or recombine various forms within their own schemata due, among other things, to competition.

Such a view reflects a result of a Western preoccupation with creativity as individual expression. Only a few *patta* painters aimed to innovate and they were always the ones closely associated with the local art elite. The majority of painters were quite content copying other peoples' work, for example using photographs, as we shall see later.

Controversies: Elements not Determined by Divine Models

There, however, are some aspects of *patta* painting, which stimulate discussion and dissent amongst the painters. Examples are the conventional decoration of the background with petals and dots (*sankhapatā*) and trees and leaves (*gachhapatra*), the number and type of colours, and the use of "shade". The common characteristic of these aspects is that they are not related to the iconographic paraphernalia of deities.

The painters from Raghurājpur, Dānda Sāhi and Puri in general agree that *pattas* have to be decorated with *sankhapatā* and *gachhapatra* to the point where little plain background is left. A painting must not look empty, but has to appear replete (*gahaliā*), in order to be considered beautiful. As we shall soon see, however, *gahaliā* also denotes an undesirable excess.

Figure 66: *Siva* and *Pārvatī*.

Nrusingha Mahāranā (E.1.1.), for example, commented on a *patta* depicting *Siva* and *Pārvatī* (figure 66):

> "It would have been better if the trees had been a bit more complete (*gahaliā*). The leaves should not have been so loose[19]" (*dhilā*).

Commenting on a *patta* depicting *Krishna*, two *gopis*, and two dancing girls (figure 67) Arjunā Mahāranā (E.2.1.) said:

> "It is absolutely empty (*bilkul khāli*). If *gachhapatra* had been given it would have been better".

He continued commenting on the *patta* depicting *Siva* and *Pārvatī* (figure 66):

> "A *bilva* tree is a must[20]. If the background had been replaced with something more complete (*gahaliā*), the painting would have been better".

Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.) commented on a figure in the work of one of his students:

> "It looks like someone who has cut his hair (*nāndiā laguchi*)".

He then showed him how to draw extra leaves and branches.

When asked what he thought of the amount of *sankhapatā* and *gachhapatra* made by the majority of the painters in Chandanpur, Hari Mahāranā (A.2.) said:

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19 According to Nrusingha there should have been more leaves.

20 The bilva tree (*Aegle marmelos*) is associated with *Siva*.

Figure 67: *Krishna*, *gopis*, and dancing girls.

> "They make a lot of *sankhapatā* because a painting, if left empty, does not look good. The rule (*niyama*) of Odissi *patta* is, the more replete the more beautiful (*seitā jete gahaliā haba, sete sundara lāgiba*). But you should not put too much work[21] on the *patta*, then it will not look beautiful. Does a shirt look beautiful with hundred thousand buttons? A *patta* only looks beautiful if we decorate as much as is needed (*jetiki darkār setiki dele bhala lāgiba*). So *gachhapatra* is given for beauty (saundarjya)".

Just as a shirt covered with buttons is not appealing, too many leaves on a tree spoils the beauty. On seeing the *patta* depicting *Krishna* and *Jashodā* milking a cow (figure 65), Hari commented:

> "...it would have been better if he had made a thin *style* of trees with less leaves. The tree is loaded (*bharti hei jāichhi*) with leaves, that is why it has no value (*mulya*)[22]. The trees are not clear (*pariskār*), it looks messed up (*āburu jāburu*)".

However, if a painting does not have a certain amount of decoration, it will be considered lacking in quality. Commenting on the *Ganesh patta*, Arjunā Mahāranā (E.2.1.) said:

> "The fact is, there should have been a bit more *design* in the clothes. Then it would have been more beautiful. A work given for *competition* needs *quality* work, more time is needed. To make it beautiful more work is needed (*sundara pāin āu tike kāma darkār*)".

The comments suggest that *gahaliā* can be either repleteness **or** excess and the painters aim to reach a balance between excess and lack (*khāli khāli*). Rather than being clearly defined, excess as well as lack are contested concepts taking form in the course of a description and often shaped in relation to the specific motif[23], as well as opposed ideas of ideal execution - not necessarily verbalised. The painters' striving for balance should therefore not be seen as a reflection of a single, shared explanation of what an ideal painting is - the kind of consensualist explanation Inden opposes

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21 Work here refers to decoration such as *sankhapatā* and *gachhapatra*.

22 *Bharti* means to fill something, for example a glass with water.

23 A painting such as *Mathura Bijaya/Akrura ratha* (see chapter 3, figure 44) for example is always described as a *gahaliā* painting.

when he argues for instance that explanations of good and evil take their shape and reproduce themselves in a continuing dialectical relationship with other opposed explanations (Inden 1985:150).

Williams suggests that thin or delicate (*saru*) implies elaboration and that this criterion is opposed to an undesirable "plainness" (1988:14). This is a misconception - a "plain" or "empty" looking painting might be described with the adjective *saru* which exclusively refers to the execution and delicacy of lines. It is *gahaliā* rather than *saru* which is opposed to "emptiness" or "plainness" (*khāli khāli*).

Poor quality is often interpreted as the result of a painter having spent a relatively short time executing a *patta*. Commenting on the *Ganesh patta* (figure 62) Arjunā continued:

> "It is fast work (*tarabariā*). If it had been done with a bit more concentration (*manonibesha*) the work would have been better. He has maybe made it for [the sake of] money, otherwise it could have been better".

However, not all painters conceived of the concept of *gahaliā* as a positive quality. Nārāyana Mahāranā (C.1.-s-i-l.) for example used the concept in a negative sense and argued that *pattas* ought to be kept relatively plain. According to Nārāyana the painters in Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi fill their paintings with *gachhapatra* and *sankhapatā* to hide the fact that they make mistakes. Other painters dismissed this as nonsense. Hari Mahāranā (A.2.) for example said:

> "To hide their mistakes? What do you think? If I have painted *Ganesh* with an extra tooth, the mistake will be apparent no matter how much *sankhapatā* and *gacchapatra* I make".

Nārāyana often stressed that it was important that a *patta* is clear. He commented on a *patta* depicting *Nabagunjara* (figure 68):

> "The work is good (*bhala heichi*). It is clear (*pariskāra heichi*)".

Figure 68: ***Nabagunjara.***

When asked to explain what he meant by *pariskāra*, Nārāyana continued:

> "Clear means the work must have craftsmanship (*kārigari*). This work is clear. Has he painted much *gacchapatra*? If he had made much *sankhapatā* it would have been crowded (*gahaliā*) and nobody would have understood the painting".

The painters quite often mention that it is important that people should understand their paintings, as we shall see in the next section. This desire to be understood is used as an argument for depicting narratives chronologically.

While Nārāyana's reason for attempting to create relatively plain *pattas* might be explained as the result of his adherence to a purist ideology[24], some painters invoke a more liberal market oriented ideology.

At least until 1992 Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.), for example, had escaped taking sides in the debate on the appropriateness of filling out the background with *sankhapatā* and gachhapatra. When asked whether some (incomplete) *pattas* looked - to his eyes - empty, he explained that it was not an appropriate question. Rather, the important matter was whether the *pattas* in question would suit the taste of his customers.

That Jagannātha's brother's son Sudharsana follows this attitude was obvious when he produced four, almost identical, *Kālī pattas*. The only difference between them was the depiction of her four hands, one of which holds a sword, another a severed head, a third which removes fear and the fourth being the so called "giving" (*barada*) hand. In each depiction the weapons and gestures had been transferred to a new hand. Sudharsana explained this with a grin on his face:

> "We will make whatever a customer wants, if he wants a *Kālī* without a sword, what's the problem? He will get it as he likes".

It is perhaps in instances like this that the difference between *pattas* made for *pujā* and those made for tourist consumption becomes most evident.

The examples suggest an ideology which strives to achieve a balance between excess and lack. On the one hand the *patta* paintings must not appear empty on the other excessive decoration is also disparaged.

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24 While participating in a three months' workshop on *patta* painting, Nārāyana worked in close connection with teachers and students of the B.K. Art College in Bhubaneshwar. The general idea at the college of what constitutes ideal *pattas* can be described as purist. For further information on this matter see chapter 6.

The painters, in general, agree that poses have to look "natural" (*prakruta*). By this they mean that the proportions of the figures should be made according to the proportions of human bodies.

Hari Mahāranā (A.2.) described how his father had taught him to paint using practical examples:

> "My father always said: Before you try to paint *Krishna* holding *Rādhā's* waist, you first hold someone's waist to see how it looks and how much of the hand will be visible".

However, there is, as earlier mentioned (cf. p. 302), a normative convention concerning appropriate proportions of figures. Seeing the *patta* depicting *Siva* and *Pārvatī* (figure 66), Arjunā Mahāranā said:

> "This *portion* is a bit too long. The painting would have been fine had it been done according to our *measurement*. The length from waist to head should equal the length from feet to waist. If this calculation (*hisāba*) is kept, the work will be all right".

The painting of *Krishna* and *Jashodā* (figure 65) was also criticised:

> "The *composition* is not good. *Composition* means their face, their body and legs. The proportion (*bhāgamāpa*) is wrong, one part is too small and another too big".

Seeing the same painting, Hari said:

> "The hands are thin (*saru*) compared to the body which is stout (*hrustaprusta*)".

This was, however, not as big a problem as in the case of the painting depicting *Siva* and *Pārvatī* (figure 66):

> "One of *Siva*'s feet is very big (*bada*) and the other one is very small (*chhota*)".

As well as striving for a balance the painters aim to achieve consonance in their paintings[25]. This is not only the case when it comes to the choice of colours, but also the perfection of details (the size of a foot for example) is important as a contribution to the whole - they must not stand out and thereby become the focus of attention.

In contradiction to Williams suggestion (1988:14) painters also consider balanced overall composition. Seeing the painting depicting *Krishna* in the company of two *gopis* and two dancing girls (figure 67) several painters commented that the *gopi* on *Krishna's* left ought to have been placed further away from *Krishna* (like the other *gopi*) for the painting to look satisfactory.

It is important that figures have appropriate proportions, but just as important that the head of a figure is in line with the feet. Nārāyana Mahāranā (C.1.-s-i-l.) was not impressed when he saw the *patta* depicting *Krishna* playing his flute and two *gopis* (figure 64):

> "If the pose (*bhangi*) is kept like this the expression (*bhāba*) will not be all right. If the leg of *Krishna* is here then the face can not remain here at all. The rule (*niyama*) says that a figure from head to the feet should be on a straight line (*saralarekhāre*)".

Frequent appeals to "naturalism" are made and the idea that figures have to be painted the way they appear in daily life is a basis for possible criticism of paintings. Nrusingha Mahāranā (E.1.1.) was looking at the *patta* depicting *Krishna* and *Jashodā* milking a cow (figure 65) and said:

> "It is good, the work is good. The main thing is that the knee is not done in a proper way. How is a cow milked? One milks sitting like this". (Nrusingha then showed how to sit).

25 There is no equivalent in the Oriya spoken by the painters of the concept of "consonance". I am aware that the use of this term is somewhat problematic. When I have chosen to use the concept it is because it conveys more of the idea of the painters' intention than, say, "balance".

Nārāyana Mahāranā commented on the same painting:

> "The milking position.....Do people milk with the right hand or the left hand? It is correct to milk with the right hand (*khāibi hātare duhinbā kathā*) but she milks with the left".

Seeing a photo of a *patta* illustrating the scene where *Karna's* chariot is sunk in the ground, Nārāyana said:

> "*Karna* lifts the chariot with a straight back - one can't do that, he should have been painted with bent knees and the wheel should have been stuck in the mud.

Nārāyana continued,

> "You know the kind of *art* they make in Chandanpur[26]? Even if the village was declared a craftsman village, their work can't be compared[27]. Look at the wheel held by *Visnu* (Nārāyana took the painting depicting *Nabagunjara*), does a wheel look like that? It does not look *natural*, it ought to have been made like the wheel of *Jagannātha* (*Visnu*)"[28].

Looking at the *patta* of *Ganesh* (figure 62), Hari (A.2.) said:

> "Have a look. He holds an axe (*pharsa*). But where is the position (*dharibāra*) of holding [an item]? The hand is kept like this. How? Did he hold the mace (*gadā*) with his nail?".

Likewise he criticised the *patta* depicting *Krishna, gopis*, and dancing girls (figure 67):

> "How is it she holds a mirror? With her nails? The *style* of the fingers is all right but she holds the mirror like this. [Hari showed how she balances the

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26 Chandanpur refers here to Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi.

27 This is a negative statement indicating that the paintings from Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi, if compared to the paintings made by the painters in Puri and Bhubaneshwar, will fall short.

28 Nārāyana here refers to the wheel of *Visnu* as it appears in the *Jagannātha* temple.

mirror on her nail]. We would put it in her hand. That is why we are called foreign (*bilāti*) and they are of the country (*deshī*)[29]".

A *patta* depicting *Bhisma* on his bed of arrows (figure 69) also did not correspond with Hari's ideas about how one holds certain objects:

> "Was it not possible to keep the bow (*dhanu*) on the shoulder? He holds it as if he was carrying vegetables".

Figure 69: *Bhisma* on his bed or arrows.

Within the artificial context of the interrogation by the anthropologist the painter will continually cross reference his observations with his own daily experiences. He is relating the credibility and accuracy to his own behaviour and everyday observation. The divine image is, in other words, validated through a painter's everyday experience. The material suggests that a *patta* in order to be considered good must comply with the painter's ideas of

29 Here Hari ironically refers to the painters of Raghurājpur and their criticism of some of the painters from Puri. For a discussion on the painters' use of *deshī* and *bilāti* see chapter 7.

what is "natural" or physically plausible. These findings contradict Williams' suggestion that reference to mimesis is absent. Williams says:

> "I can only report that the general comparison of the images in the painting with referents in the real world did not arise per se as a criterion for judgment on the part of the artists" (1988:14)[30].

Seeing the *patta* depicting *Kālī* dancing on *Siva* (figure 63) with the drops of blood dripping from her tongue, Hari said:

> "What is this? *Blood*? They have made *unnatural* work. It flows in a line".

In a similar manner Biranchi found that the *patta* depicting *Siva* and *Pārvatī* (figure 66) did not conform to his conception of what is plausible:

> "The background colour does not touch the feet - it looks as if they stand in space (*sunya*)".

There are, however, painters who do not consider the question of "naturalism", or every day experience, important when evaluating a *patta.* When I asked Binod Mahāranā (G.) from the Training Centre what he thought of the way *Siva* sleeps in the painting depicting *Kālī* dancing on *Siva* in a rage (figure 63), he said:

> "He sleeps, that is *traditional work. Natural* is not necessary".

This is yet another example of how the conception of a painter with close contact to the local art elite is distinct from those of the painters who stay and work in their villages.

Another interesting feature is that many painters, as I have earlier indicated, stress the importance of making easily comprehensible *pattas*. Having seen the *Nabagunjara patta* (figure 68) Hari spoke eloquently:

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30 Williams makes this statement despite observing that the criteria for the evaluation of *bhangi* may bear some relationship to mimesis (1988:14).

> "What is the matter (*ghatanātā*)? Have these two suddenly been invented (*ābiskāra*) or what? One bows his head in a hurry and the other [is shown] with a bow. I do not understand this research (*gabesanā*). What is the *story*? Arjunā should just kneel and greet (*namaskāra*). This is too much (*bahut*). They will never understand. He should just keep the bow on the floor and do *namaskāra*. That can easily be understood (*short re bujhihaba*). He has made the *Nabagunjara* painting in a different (*oltā poltā*) way[31]. It could have been done with one thing [figure]. What will people understand (*kana bujhibe*) if you make three things at a time?".

These examples suggest that evaluations do not take place in the realm of "pure aesthetics", but are grounded in a privileging of every day reality. In this respect, the painters' way of relating to their paintings is not unlike that of the subordinate class in France, which adheres to what Bourdieu describes as an anti-Kantian aesthetic (1979). One of his examples is the response of a Parisian manual worker to a photograph of an old woman's hands:

> "Oh, she's got terribly deformed hands!...The old girl must've worked hard. Looks like she's got arthritis. She's definitely crippled, unless she's holding her hands like that (imitates gesture)? Yes, that's it, she's got her hand bent like that" (1979:44).

Like the painters, the manual worker relates his observation to his everyday experience. The onlookers imitation of the gesture of the old woman echoes Nrusingha's illustration of how one milks a cow (cf. p. 319).

Evaluations of *Pattas*

> "Good work might be *Krishna, Rāmāyanā, Mahābhārata* or *Rādhākrishna* duo. If intricate work (*kārukārjya*) is made upon the painting, work which [otherwise] takes two days will take eight or ten days. The work which takes a longer time is good work (*jie besi dina lāgiba sie hauchi bhala kāma*)".

Ananta Mahāranā (E.1.2.) from Dānda Sāhi went on to explain how his household made the quality of paintings according to the order. If they were paid well they would spend the time required to make what will be

31 Here Hari's way of speaking suggests that *oltā poltā* should perhaps be translated as "strange" rather than "different". *Oltā poltā* means reverse, opposite, or messed up.

considered a good work. But, according to Ananta, they are almost never paid well.

His cousin Arjunā Mahāranā (E.2.1.) added:

> "A work given for competition needs *quality* work. More time is needed. To make it beautiful, more work is needed".

The quality of a *patta* is partly understood to be proportional to the time spent making the painting. It does, of course, also depend on the skill of the painter.

There are several things the painters take into consideration other than the painting itself, when commenting on a *patta.* When discussing the quality of a specific *patta,* painters always enquire as to who has made the painting[32].

Among other things, this question implies a wish to know whether the *patta* in question is made by apprentices (and in that case in which stage of the apprenticeship) or an independent painter, (either in collaboration with apprentices, other independent painters or on his own). Whether the painter actually acquires the required information or not, the response to the question: "What is your opinion of this painting?" is almost always: "As the craftsman is, so is the work" (*jemiti kārigaraku chahinkiri semiti heichi*).

Here the painter equates the quality of the work with the skill of the craftsman in question. Therefore a painting made by an apprentice, for example, in his second year of learning will be evaluated appropriately.

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32 Several painters might have contributed to a painting but the senior artist "finish" the work and is responsible for the quality.

For the painters it does not make sense to judge a *patta* made by a student negatively, unless the student in question, as far as the painter is concerned, should have been able to produce better work. Rather than judging a *patta* as an object per se, the painters aim to evaluate the *patta* in question in relation to the standard of the craftsman who made it.

The dealer Bānāmbara Nāyaka (Raghurājpur) commented on the *patta* depicting *Krishna* and two *gopis* (figure 64):

> "This work is childish (*pilaliā kāma*). If it is done by a child, it is good".

Had the painting, however, been made by a painter who had served his apprenticeship, Bānāmbara would most probably have found reason to criticise it.

The attempts to account for, rather than establish the quality of a particular *patta*, do not only concern the work made by students. Lingarāj Mahāranā (C.1.1.) from Raghurājpur considered the quality of a *patta* in relation to the context of production, when he said:

> "Oh, Pubu[33] made that? Well, he must have done it in a hurry because he is in need of money - it is a work done for business (*byabasāya*)".

Looking at the *patta* depicting *Krishna, Jashodā*, a cow, and a calf (figure 65) Nārāyana kept wondering who the artist was and said:

> "It seems like a *training period* work. It looks like a work made by Pramod or [the children of] Chandanpur? Of course it has been made by a trainee, his style is of a kind of it's own".

Ananta Mahāranā (E.1.2.) briefly looked at the *patta* depicting *Ganesh* and said:

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33 Pubu is one of Ananta Mahāranā's (E.1.2.) sons.

> "It seems to be the handwork of my father-in-law [Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.)]... or is it perhaps Māga [Māguni Mahāpātra (I.2.2.1.), Ananta's son-in-law]? Everything is perfect".

In some cases, the questions concerning who the maker of a painting is, have a political character. This was never more apparent than when a painter from Puri or Bhubaneshwar identified that a painting was made by a painter from either Raghurājpur or Dānda Sāhi and as a result immediately began to criticise the work.

Nārāyana Mahāranā (C.1.-s-i-l.) commented on a *patta* depicting *Nabagunjara* made by the late Arjunā Mahāranā (E.2.1.):

> "He is a Master Craftsman, so his work is of course not bad. But you must know the kind of art made in Chandanpur. They always make the proportions wrong, for example making small heads on big bodies".

Nārāyana Mahāranā very often criticised the painters from Raghurājpur. Rather than seeing these as purely aesthetic comments on their work, Nārāyana's criticism ought to be seen in terms of the relationship of dependence he has with these painters. Nārāyana sold all his paintings through painters in Raghurājpur, a topic discussed in depth in chapter 7.

The examples show how a painting, in order to be evaluated, has to be contextualised. One must know who made it and for whom. Only one craftsman out of fifteen was reluctant to give an evaluation of other painters' work. Dīnabandhu Mahāpātra (I.2.3.1.), who taught in the Training Centre, said he did not like to criticise the work of others. In general, however, the Puri painters quite happily engaged in evaluations and criticism. The reluctance to comment on others' work, well known in the existing anthropological literature on art and aesthetics (Haberland 1986: 127, Price and Price 198O:38-4O) is thus, at the best of times, irrelevant in the case of the painters of Puri district.

When commenting on a painting, the general evaluation will always be followed by a specification which should perhaps be seen as an explanation of the particular features leading to the judgement. It might, for example, be uneven fingers or the pose of a figure which is being criticized. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule and although the majority of painters appeal to context there are a few who would claim the worth of a painting even if seen in isolation.

The emphasis on contextualisation I have described shows that contra Williams' suggestion (1988:13) painters do not separate the evaluation of a painting from that of the painter. In their evaluations painters recognise that artists are capable of different qualities of work at different stages of their lives and in different situations. A consideration of the identity of the artist does not, therefore, as Williams suggests, imply "equating the value of the man [painter] with the value of his product" (ibid.:13). There is no enduring essential link between a named artist and a particular quality of work but rather a pragmatic recognition of factors, such as the long term acquisition of skill and fluctuations in financial conditions, that account for the quality of work.

For the *Chitrakāras* the point is knowing not the artist as such, but the context in which a painting was executed - was a Master Craftsman for example in urgent need of money when he produced the painting in question? Williams interprets the references artists make to contextual situations, such as the young age of a painter, as "a diplomatic way of couching criticism" (1988:10) and thus fails to recognise this pragmatic appeal to context which, as I have shown in detail, is a central part of all strategies of evaluation.

This has implications for Williams' use of tables as a means of ascertaining critical standards. The simple numerical evaluation is directly opposed to the local way of evaluating which the author set out to explore. This is

indicated by the fact that several painters refused to rank the paintings while they did not mind talking about them (Williams 1988:6,7). Rather than clarifying, the numerical tables (which reflect an aesthetic bias assuming that paintings can be compared as isolated objects) thus obstruct any understanding of the standards of the artists.

Painters' need to contextualise paintings and the refusal of any absolute judgement brings to mind an article by Cohn in which he argues that linguistic meaning is more contextually dependent in India than in Europe. He writes:

> "Meaning for the English was something attributed to a word, a phrase or an object, which could be determined and translated, hopefully with a synonym which had a direct referent to something in what the English thought of as a "natural" world. Everything had a more or less specific referent for the English. With the Indians, meaning was not necessarily construed in the same fashion. The effect and affect of hearing a Brahmin chanting in Sanskrit at a sacrifice did not entail meaning in the European sense; it was to have one's substance literally affected by the sound" (1985:279).

What we have in the case of the *patta* paintings is a local (pre-semanticised) significance of paintings contextually determined through the identity of the artist(s) and the network of social relations. As we shall see in chapter 6 this significance is stripped away in the process of "semanticization" by the elite of the art world and even more so perhaps in academic discourse[34].

34 By "semanticization" I mean the endowment of exegetical and aesthetic "meaning" in art objects.

Section II

Painters' Perceptions of European Paintings

To the *patta* painters it is important that paintings are easily comprehensible. Paintings should preferably depict something well known such as deities, living beings or objects. Motifs are interpreted with reference to Orissan legends, mythology or everyday life. Paintings are partly evaluated according to their clarity: lines, for example, must be sharp and depictions direct. Local Orissan conventions are imposed on *patta* paintings as well as other types of art such as European oil painting. Distinct forms of painting are, in other words, evaluated within a single paradigm of appreciation. Thus the relativist contextualism described above is ultimately framed by the artists' incalcation within their particular sphere of the art world. This was apparent when I asked the painters to comment upon sixteen post cards depicting European paintings made between 1422 and 1913.

The painters in general preferred figurative, naturalist images rather than abstract impressionistic ones. The few painters who appreciated the latter type of paintings were the ones who had a relatively close contact with local art specialists and moreover were familiar with different types of art from exhibitions.

The interviews illustrate the painters' unfamiliarity with the techniques of painting using single point perspective[35]. Moreover, it became apparent that painters conceived photographs as necessary for production of any naturalist painting.

35 Independent of each other, ten painters were asked to comment upon the post cards.

Painters' Preference for Naturalist Paintings

When asked to compare two postcards depicting paintings made by Guardi and Pissarro all painters stated that they preferred the earlier painting (Figure 70).

Figure 70: "Venice: Piassa San Marco" by Francesco Guardi (1712-1793).

Sudarshana Mahāpātra (B.2.1.) was confused by the Pissarro's painting (figure 71):

> "I prefer this one (by Guardi). I can't understand what is up and what is down (*uparatā kie o talatā kie*) in that one (by Pissarro). In this one (by Guardi) this is the top and this is the bottom, if it is held like this (he turned it upside down) it will look ugly (asundara *dekhājiba*). But if it is held like this then one can call it a road - maybe even a national highway!"[36]

36 The last comment was intended as a joke.

Figure 71: "Paris, the Boulevard Montmartre at Night" by Camille Pissarro (1830-1903).

Nārāyana Mahāranā (C.1.-s-i-l.) found that the painting by Guardi looked *natural* whereas the one by Pissarro was difficult (*akhadiā*):

> "Nothing can be figured out (*janāpaduni kichi*) from that painting (by Pissarro). It is a *modern*[37] type of painting, why is it like that? I don't understand anything. I don't like it. An artist has made it so there are no faults. To me it looks like things look in rain. It is an unclear painting (*apariskāra*). But this (by Guardi) looks beautiful (*badhiā*). Absolutely *natural*. It looks as if a *natural* photograph has been taken. Shadow is there as it should be, light is there as it should be and people..."

Also Nrusingha Mahāranā (E.1.1.) from Dānda Sāhi found Guardi's painting pleasing:

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37 When asked whether 100 years old paintings could be called modern Nārāyana responded: "So what if they are 400-500 years old? We say *modern* painting or *graphic* painting or *wash* painting according to the *design* of the painting. *Natural* painting is called *modern painting*".

"It is nice to look at (*dekhibāku bhala lāguchi*). Everything is clear in this (*pariskāra achi*)".

Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.) said it was not possible to understand Pissarro's painting, Nrusingha Mahāranā (E.1.1.) thought it was a bit "messed up" (*tikie bilibilā heigalā*) and so did Banamālī Mahāpātra (I.2.1.1.) from Raghurājpur who described it as *bālubāluā lāguchi*[38]. Biranchi Das (M.) from Dānda Sāhi said it simply looked like a smear of colours (*ranga bolilā bhaliā dekhā jāuchi*).

The painting "Fruit Dish, Bottle and Violin" by Pablo Picasso (figure 72) also caused confusion and most painters stated they didn't like it.

Sudarshana (B.2.1.) was not at all impressed with the painting:

"What is this? Is it different kinds of dresses?"

When told the title of the painting Sudarshana continued:

"Where is the bottle? I don't like this".

Seeing the same painting Nrusingha Mahāranā (E.1.1.) said:

"Wherever you look only hands, legs and heads appear. When you see it from this side, the arse is here. I don't like it[39]".

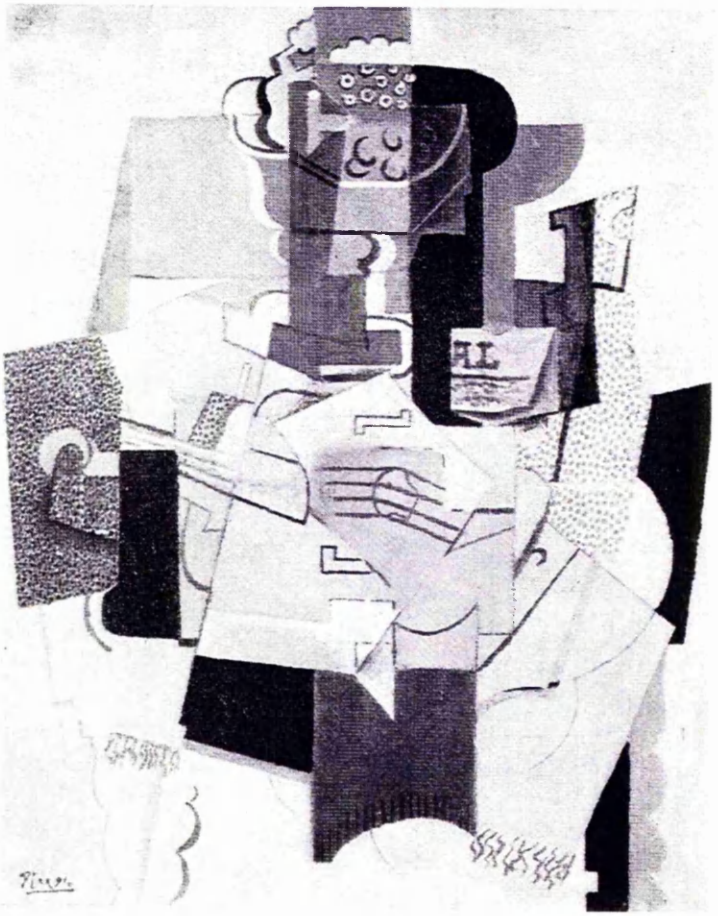
Provided that the painting was not from India, Kāilasha Mahāranā (J.2.) from Raghurājpur thought it was good:

38 also meaning "messed up".

39 Nrusingha was looking for a deity or at least figures familiar to him.

"I can't understand it. It might be a foreign (*bāhāra*) thing. If it is a thing from outside India I think it is good. It is not bad. A craftsman never makes bad work".

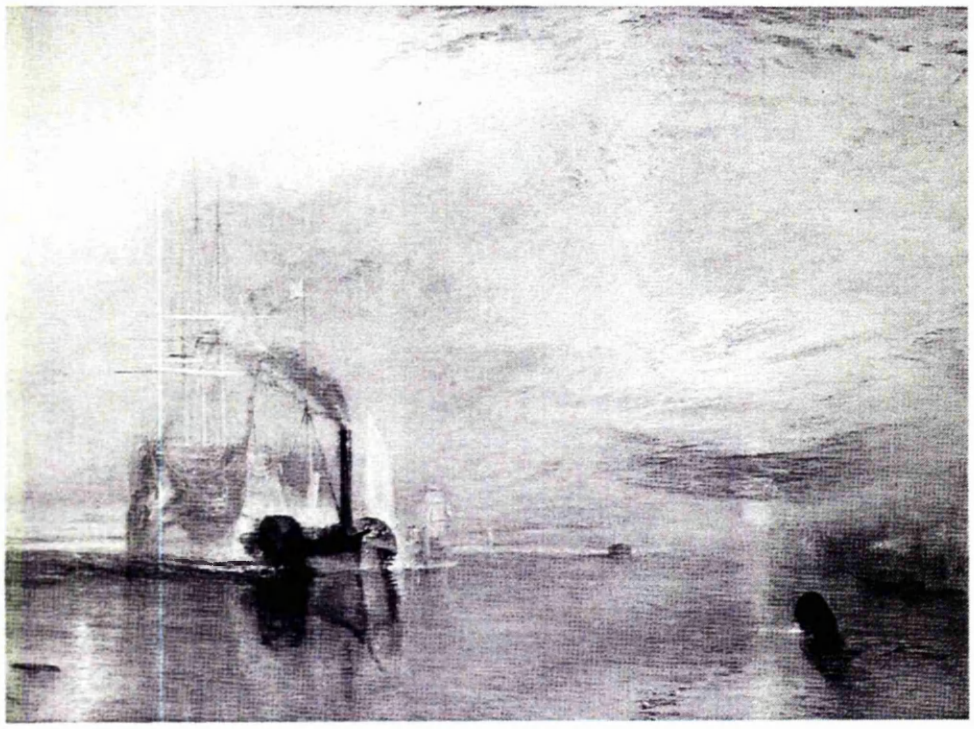
Figure 72: "Fruit Dish, Bottle and Violin" by Pablo Picasso (1881-1973).



The "Fighting Téméraire" by Turner (figure 73) in general got a negative response and most painters found it difficult to understand.
Sudarshana for example said:

> "What is this? I don't like it. It is a modern work. I can't understand what it is".

Figure 73: "Fighting Téméraire" by Joseph M. W. Turner (1775-1851).



It didn't take him long to decide that the painting by Elizabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun (figure 74) was the best:

> "This is the best of all (*eitā sabuthu bhala lāguchi*). See for yourself. Her hair, her face and the hat. Of all the paintings this has the best *design*".

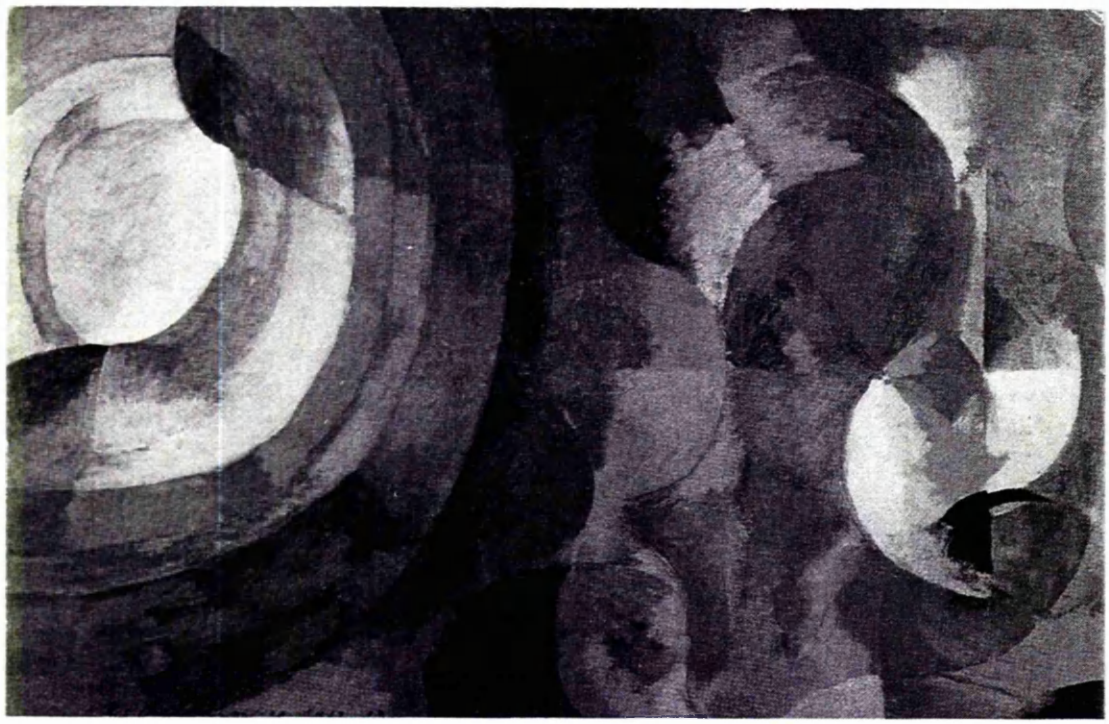
The painters often use the English word "design" when referring to the skill with which a decoration has been produced. That a painting has a "good design" implies that it has finely executed handwork.

This was precisely what Sudarshana found was lacking in the painting by Robert Delaunay (figure 75):

> "*Saru kalā is not there. The work is mixed up (bilibilā)*, a bit blue, a bit red, a bit green, a bit yellow, is there any craftsmanship (*kārigari*) in this?"

Figure 74: "Self Portrait in a Straw Hat" by Elizabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun (1755-1842).

Figure 75: "Circular Forms, Sun and Moon" by Robert Delaunay (1885-1941).



Saru kalā is, as mentioned, the final step in a *patta* painting and indicates that a painting is complete. To Sudarshana, the lack of *saru kalā* in Delaunay's painting was an indicator of poor quality.

There was quite a varied response to Lyonel Feininger's painting (figure 76). Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.) thought it was only a sketch, so did Arjunā Mahāranā (E.2.1.) who said that only *unnatural* things could be seen in the painting. Banamālī Mahāpātra (I.2.1.1.) said that nothing could be figured out, Kāilasha Mahāranā (J.2.) asked whether it was a house with a kitchen or a bathroom and Biranchi Das (M.) (Dānda Sāhi) couldn't understand it and asked whether it was a computer[40].

40 The painters were never asked to give a possible interpretation. However, when confronted with an unfamiliar style of painting they, of their own accord, spoke of its referent.

Figure 76: "The Lady in Mauve" by Lyonel Feininger (1871-1956).

Nārāyana Mahāranā (C.1.-s-i-l.) was the only painter who stated that he liked Feininger's painting[41]:

> "The pose (*bhangi*) depends on the bend on the waist. It is done in a *computer* sort of way. It looks good".

41 Nārāyana Mahāranā who had participated in the work shop on *patta* paintings held in Bhubaneshwar, was one of the few painters who went to exhibitions, visited libraries to find old motifs and made an effort to see galleries and museums while visiting Delhi.

The examples show that the painters privilege realism but respond negatively to abstract art. One is reminded of Bourdieu's discussion of the hostility of the working class and of the middle-class fractions least rich in cultural capital towards any kind of formal experimentation. The starting point of the high aesthetic, namely the disinterestedness or "pure" gaze, is refused in the "popular aesthetic" which subordinates form to function. An example is a Grenoble baker's comments on a television show made with sophisticated technical effects:

> "I don't like those cut-up things at all, where you see a head, then a nose, then a leg...First you see a singer all drawn out, three metres tall, then the next minute he's got arms two metres long. Do you find that funny? Oh, I just don't like it, it's stupid, I don't see the point of distorting things" (Bourdieu 1979:33).

It is not my intention here to suggest that Bourdieu's analysis of the distribution of cultural capital in France can explain the responses of the Orissan painters. However, there is in this rejection of formal experimentation by the subordinate class in France a striking parallel to the Orissan painters' responses, but it is, of course, a different phenomena grounded in distinct and different realities.

European Paintings Evaluated within a Local Orissan Paradigm

A cartoon by Leonardo da Vinci (figure 77) caused Nrusingha (E.1.1.) trouble because he couldn't recognize any of the figures:

> "It can't be figured out. Who is *Rāma*, who is *Krishna*, it can't be figured out".

Nrusingha did, however, like Raphael's naturalist painting (figure 78):

> "It is good. Absolutely, totally good (*Ekdam purā bhala*)".

Figure 77: "The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne and Saint John the Baptist" by Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519).

Confronted with an abstract painting by Delaunay (figure 75), Nrusingha did not know what to make of the painting:

> "Hands, legs, nothing appears (*kichhi jānāpaduni*). Where is the hand, where is the leg, where is the head, nothing can be understood. It cannot be figured out what motif it is".

Figure 78: "The Madonna and Child with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Nicholas of Bari", by Raphael (1483-1520).

According to Nrusingha the painting by Turner (figure 73) didn't serve its purpose:

> "It does not work (*helāni*), it is not clean [clear] (*safā*). It is a boat....is it *Nābakeli*[42]?

42 *Nābakeli* (to play boat) or *nābarasa* refers to *Rādhā* and *gopis* joining limbs to form a boat. *Krishna* is seated on the boat playing his flute. This event is only rarely painted by the contemporary painters, who simply paint *Krishna* and the *gopis* sailing (see chapter 3, figure 32).

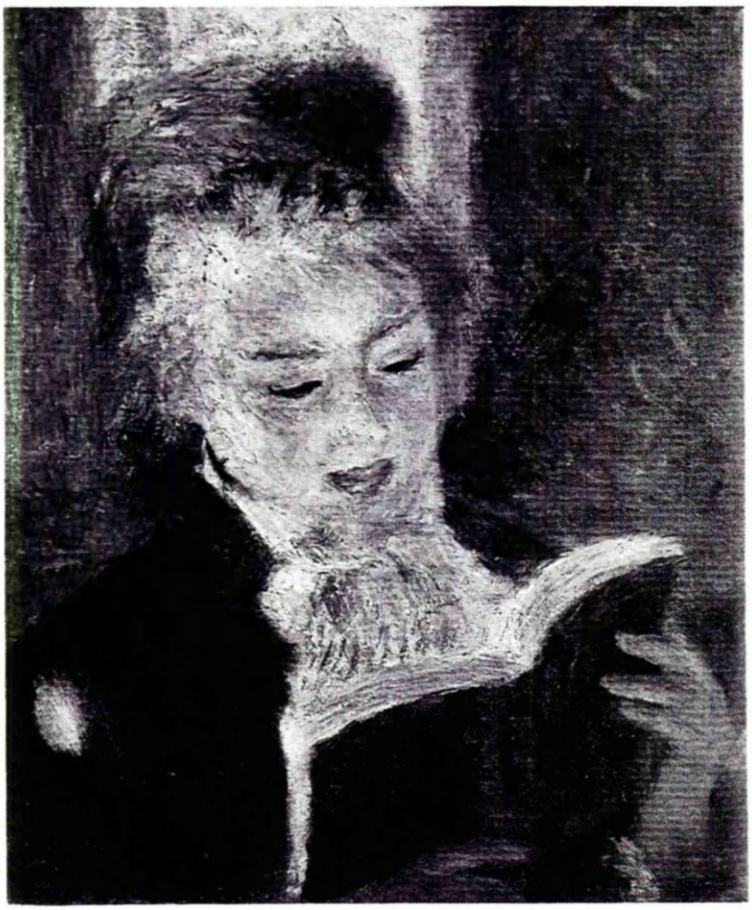
Kāilasha Mahāranā (J.2.) also had the Orissan *patta* paintings in mind when he commented on the painting by Raphael (figure 78):

> "It looks like a work depicting the kings and the queens of another country....made according to the story of the family of the king[43]".

Figure 79: "Sunny Path", by August Macke (1887-1914).

43 One on the popular motifs in *patta* painting known as *Kānchi bijaya* refers to the legend about the help provided to king Purushottama Deva of Puri by *Jagannātha* and *Balabhadra*.

Figure 80: "La Leseuse" by Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919).



Seeing the painting by Macke (figure 79), Prema Mahāranā (mother of Gopāla Mahāranā [E.1.3.1.]) from Raghurājpur said[44]:

> "A person is standing, doing some sort of work. *Gachhapatra* is there. There is a flower-tree, a girl is playing, the face is nice".

44 Prema found the questions difficult: "The youngsters like Kāilasha and all they are able to understand you. But I, being a person of that time, can't understand. These things (different kinds of paintings and motifs) were not there at that time".

To Prema, a maker of *jātri pattis*, the trees fulfil the Orissan convention of letting trees (*gachhapatra*) fill out otherwise empty background.

Some paintings were thought to have been made by children or simply left unfinished. When seeing the painting by Pierre-Auguste Renoir (figure 80), Nrusingha Mahāranā (E.1.1.) said:

> "It is not finished (*sarini*). The work is left incomplete (*kāma achi bāki*)".

Figure 81: "The Lute Player" by August Macke (1887-1914).

Likewise he didn't find the painting by August Macke (figure 81) complete:

> "Its face is not done well (*helāni*). It is not good (*bhala helani*), nothing is done. Work...fine (*saru*) *line* is only half made (*adhā karichi*). The work is incomplete (*bāki achi kāma*)".

Kālucharana Bārika (K.) thought that the painting by Renoir (figure 80) was lacking in skill:

> "She reads a book. Has this been made by a child?".

Commenting on Macke's painting he said (figure 81):

> "It is good but not clear (*pariskār nāhin*). It seems to be the work of a child".

Nārāyana Mahāranā (C.1.-s-i-l.) came to the same conclusion:

> "It is good but it looks as if it has been made by a child. The lines of the work are not sharp".

Seeing the same painting Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.) simply asked:

> "Is it the handiwork of a student?"

Nrusingha (E.1.1.) liked the other painting "Sunny Path" by August Macke (figure 79), but still thought that the painter had not finished his task:

> "It is good but the work is not finished. Nothing can be figured out".

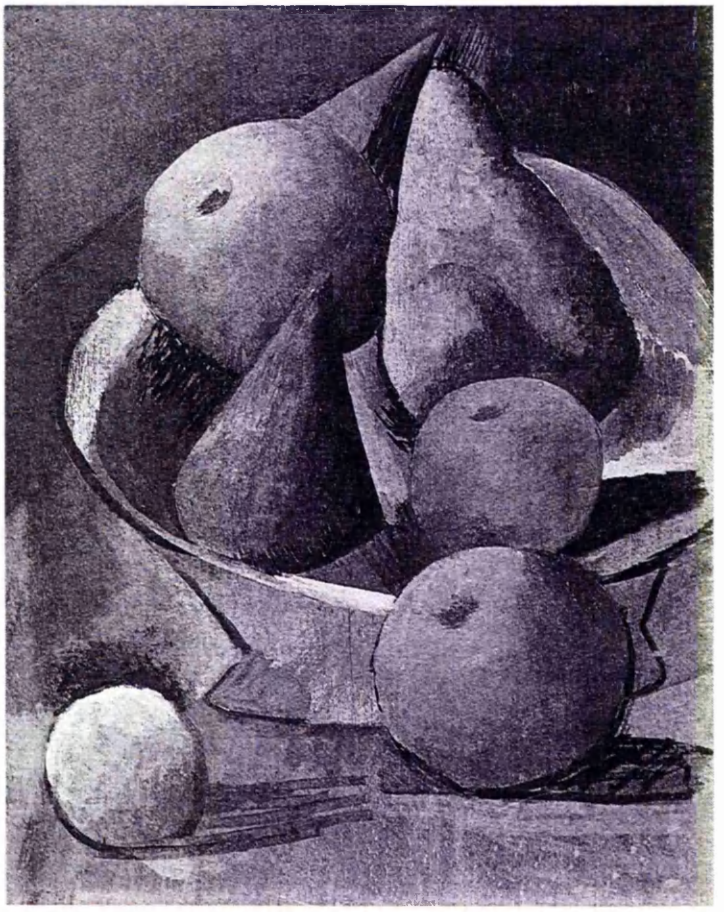
He also thought that the painting "Fruit-bowl with Pears and Apples" by Picasso (figure 82) was incomplete:

> "What is this thing? It is half made (*adhā heichi ta*)".

The colours of the fruits puzzled Kāilasha Mahāranā (J.2.):

"All these are fruits. In India apples are red. We can easily recognize them, but this is different; the colour didn't come. It is not that good".

Figure 82: "Fruit-bowl with Pears and Apples" by Pablo Picasso (1881-1973).



However, one does not have to turn to a style as different as European paintings before a painting falls beyond he scope of what *patta* painters find aesthetically intelligible and pleasing. Seeing the *patta* depicting *Krishna* and *Jashodā* (figure 65) from Ganjam, (southern part of Orissa), Biranchi (M.) said:

"This border (*dhadi*) is not good. Our [type of] border is made with creepers (*latā*) and branches (*dāla*) but this is only made with ordinary dots (*sankhatopi*)".

Seeing the *patta* depicting *Ganesh* (figure 62), Biranchi was clearly more pleased:

"In my opinion (*mata*) this is good. It is our *type* of work".

Nārāyana was puzzled when he saw the *patta* depicting *Jashodā* and *Krishna* (figure 65):

"The colour of the cow and calf is all right, but why do the clothes of *Jashodā* look a bit *odd*. It does not look like our Orissan colour[45]".

The distinction between Orissan work, classified as "good" and other work seen as "odd" or "bad" is part of a wider discourse of "country" (*deshi*) and "foreign" (*bilāti*) which will be discussed in chapter 7.

The examples show how the *patta* painters impose Orissan judgements upon all art. They search for figures or themes from Hindu mythology and criticise a painting which has not been painted with thin black lines. Different aspects are evaluated, such as clarity of lines, decoration and use of colours in order to provide a more general evaluation of a painting, clearly exemplified in Nrusingha's comment: "It is good. Absolutely, totally good" (cf. page 338). Rough lines or paintings which in their eyes appear unclear are thought to be made by children.

Rather than saying "I do not understand this, it is art of another culture" the painters simply dismiss the majority of European paintings as "bad". This material suggests that when painters are prompted to make judgements outside their habitual paradigm of appreciation they cease to be relative.

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45 *Jashodā's* sari was painted with a fluorescent colour.

According to Gombrich, early impressionist painting was initially bound to be difficult to read. Gombrich has suggested that it is necessary to know how to look at paintings in order to understand them. "It took some time", says Gombrich, "before the public learned that to appreciate an Impressionist painting one has to step back a few yards, and enjoy the miracle of seeing these puzzling patches suddenly fall into place and come to life before your eyes" (1989:415-16)[46]. The *patta* painters negative response to impressionist and abstract art might likewise be caused by a cognitive difficulty resulting from a similar lack of incalcation. The painters in general rarely have a chance to see abstract and impressionist art. Several had never seen examples other than the post cards I had brought and the learning process of reading this type of art had therefore only just begun.

Naturalist Paintings and the Need for Photographs

When asked why he thought that the painting by Jan Van Eyck (figure 83) was good, Kālucharana Bārika (K.) said:

> "These people have been photographed. A light is hung inside, a dog is inside the house and [especially] their dresses - that is why I like it. It looks like Rajasthani art[47]".

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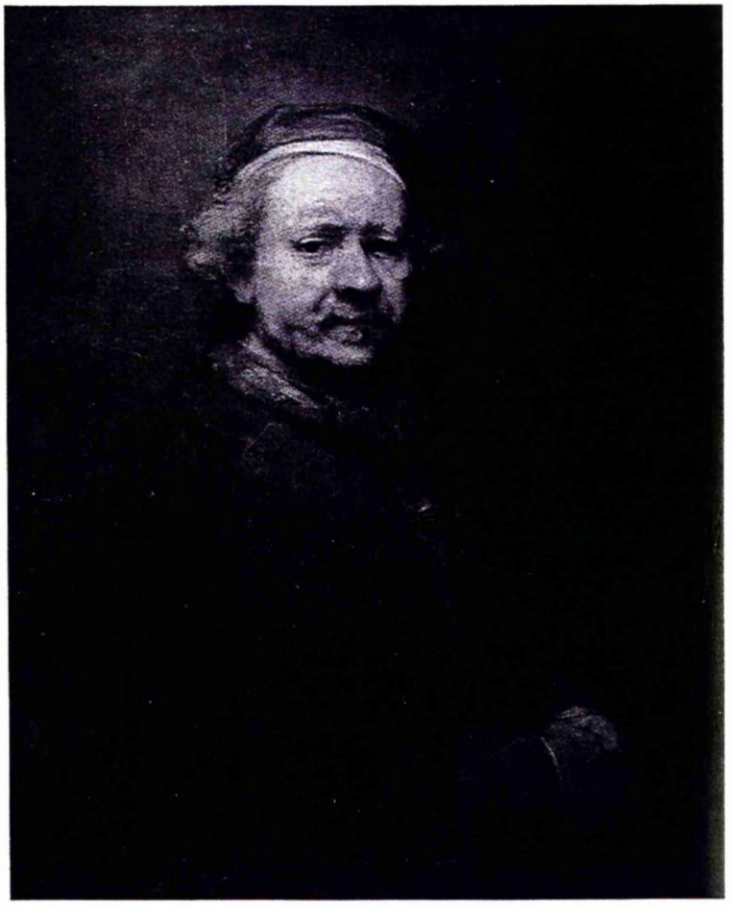
46 The Parisian public obviously had some difficulty appreciating the first impressionist paintings. Gombrich quotes one of the press notices with which the first exhibitions of the Impressionists were received: "A humorous weekly wrote in 1876: 'The rue le Peletier is a road of disasters. After the fire at the Opéra, there is now yet another disaster there. An exhibition has just been opened at Durand-Ruel which allegedly contains paintings. I enter and my horrified eyes behold something terrible. Five or six lunatics, among them a woman, have joined together and exhibited their works. I have seen people rock with laughter in front of these pictures, but my heart bled when I saw them. These would-be artists call themselves revolutionaries, "Impressionists". They take a piece of canvas, colour and brush, daub a few patches of paint on it at random, and sign the whole thing with their name. It is a delusion of the same kind as if the inmates of Bedlam picked up stones from the wayside and imagined they had found diamonds'" (Gombrich 1989:411). The Magic Eye pictures are a contemporary example of images which cause many people difficulties because they do not know how to look at them.

47 Kālucharana was one of the travelled *patta* painters. Among other places he had visited Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi participating in Exhibitions or just to sell paintings. This has given him a chance to see other styles of paintings. By "Rajasthani" art Kālucharana meant Moghul miniature paintings.

Figure 83: "The Arnolfini Marriage" by Jan van Eyck (active 1422, died 1441).

The remark that the people have been "photographed" refers to the belief that naturalist paintings can only be made by copying photographs. When seeing the self portrait by Rembrandt (figure 84) Kālucharana continued:

Figure 84: "Self Portrait" by Rembrandt (1606-1669).



"He must have made it seeing a photograph, otherwise it will not look *natural*. Suppose I was to paint you. It would not look good unless you give me your photograph. It will be good if I see the photo and then make the painting".

Kālucharana classified Elizabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun's painting as "modern" and was asked to explain what he meant by modern art:

> "Modern art is not our Orissan art but foreign (*bideshi*) art. In *foreign* [countries] they make natural paintings looking at a photo. I mean hair, face, hand, the knot of her braid".

The comments concerning the need for photograph referents on which to model naturalist paintings reflect the painters' unfamiliarity with techniques which allow one to represent perspective.

Problem solving, however, only partly explains why photographs are thought to be a necessary step in the process of producing a naturalist painting. During a discussion of the ideas and uses of photographs, I asked Hari Mahāranā (A.2.) from Puri which would be most truthful, a painting or a photograph of a person. There were no doubts in his mind when he said:

> "The photograph. A photo is a *natural* thing. Suppose I took your photograph and then painted it [copied it], it will still be the *natural* [that is the photograph] which is most truthful (*sata*). Suppose we take a photograph of a temple and a painter paints the temple without seeing the photo, then there will be mistakes (*bhul*) in the painting". [But if he paints looking at the photograph] it will be the same (*sem sem*)".

Here Hari privileges, not the indexical properties of photography that secure its juridical status in various legal systems, but its monocular perspective (as he says, a painted copy of the photograph will be equally truthful). The photograph's iconic properties are privileged over its indexical quality[48].

48 While an iconic sign in some way resembles the object, the link between an indexical sign and the object is contiguity or concurrence rather than resemblance or a shared quality (Daniel 1987:31).

Other Visual Fields: Acceptable Sources of Inspiration?

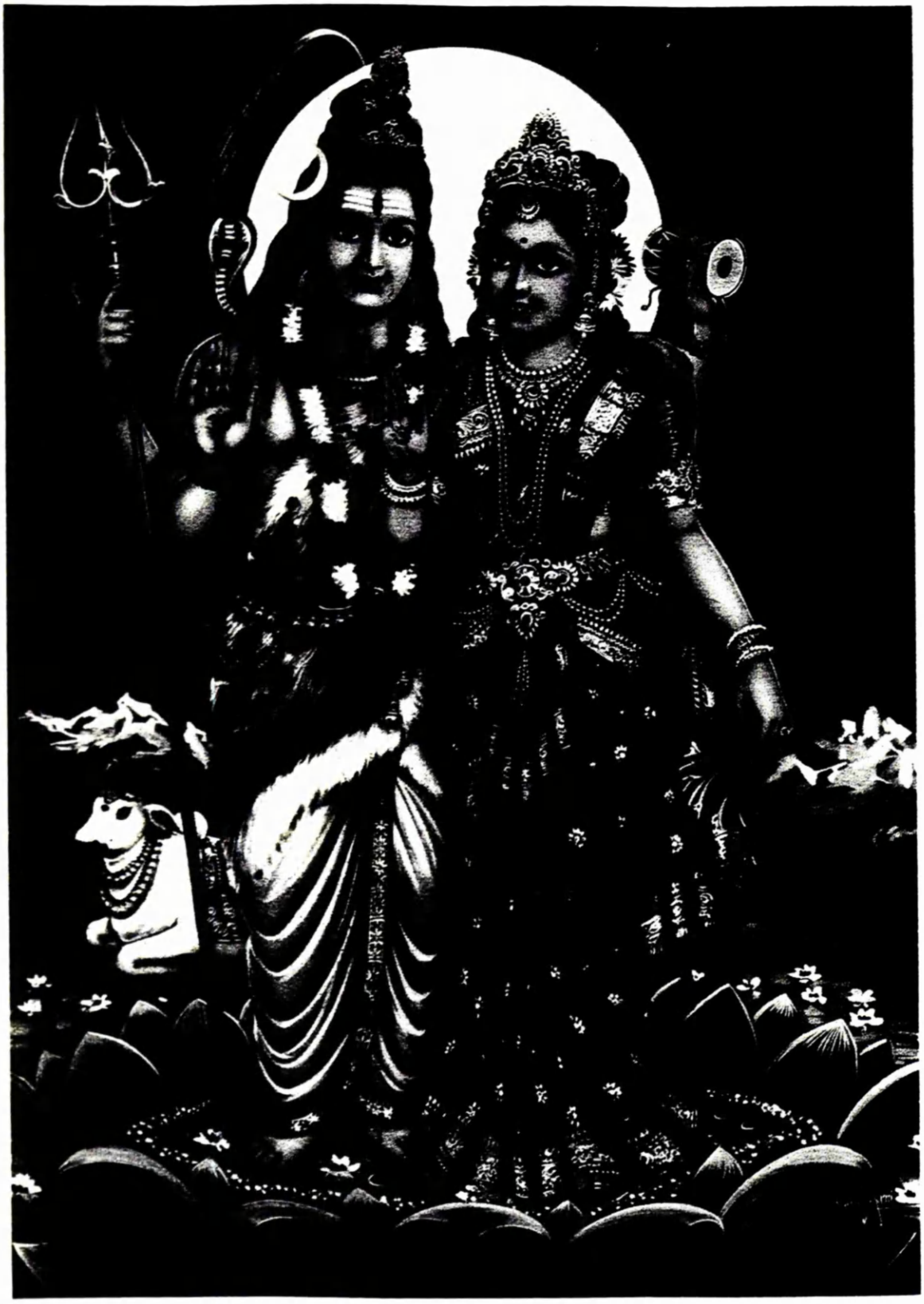
As we have seen, painters read other visual fields against their (visual) experience of *patta* paintings[49]. Other fields, therefore, not only help painters to define *patta* painting (what a panting ought or ought not to be like) but are also sources of inspiration. One such field is calendar prints which regularly arises in conversation amongst the painters, most commonly during discussions on art specialists and their evaluations.

Amongst painters, calendar prints are conceived as "modern art", the main defining feature being the use of depth and shadow. Even though some painters may state the opposite when asked, contemporary paintings often contain more or less obvious elements from calendar art. The *patta* depicting *Siva* and *Pārvatī* (figure 66) was painted by painters in Dānda Sāhi and made for general tourist consumption. The halo behind *Siva* and *Pārvatī* is a feature inspired by a calendar print (see figure 85).

Another example is the painting *Gitā*, which resulted from the inquiries of the anthropologist. Looking through a collection of chromolithographs published by the Madras company of J.B. Khanna & Co., Gopāla Mahāranā (E.1.3.1.) stated that he found the *Gitā* print which had a metallic sheen particularly beautiful (cf. chapter 3, figure 46a). Asked whether the print would be useful if he had to make a *patta* painting, Gopāla said it was not possible to use that kind of painting because it was not Odissi work but came from "outside" (*bāhāra*). However, two days later he came to borrow the print, as a customer had ordered a *Gita* painting and wanted "something new". The result was a painting (cf. chapter 3, figure 46) which is made in *patta* style but with changes in the depiction of the motif. Rather than the

49 In a discussion of the role of museums in India Arjun Appadurai and Carol A. Breckenridge have suggested the term interocular field to describe how a viewer's gaze is affected by previous experiences of other visual fields (1993).

Figure 85: Siva and Pārvatī published by J.B. Khanna & Co.



conventional four wheeled chariot with four pillars holding up the roof, Gopāla copied the chariot in the print which had only two wheels and two pillars supporting the canopy.

Usually, however, the source of inspiration will be less obvious. A painter might choose to copy an element from a print such as a pose he considers beautiful or the way a god looks (*chāhānī*) at the spectator.

Asked whether he thought painters ought to see the wall paintings in Buguda, Moghul art or other kinds of Indian painting to derive inspiration, Kālucharana Bārika (K.) said:

> "It is the rule to go and see [other kinds of work]. If one sees those things one's *brain* will increase [you will get ideas]. Do you see that print depicting *Rāma* on the wall? We don't use a garland around *Rāma's* neck. But does it look beautiful?...Don't you think that would make a good *design*? The emotion (*bhāba*) has come with the garland - we can do that in *patta* too"....Even if we get ideas from other kinds of work, we still [paint] in our style. We are not copying (*nakal*) them, it doesn't ruin (*nosta kariba*) our art".

Kālucharana was aware that calendar prints, as a source of inspiration, are controversial and evaded possible criticism stating that painters' continue to paint in their own style, integrating elements from other styles.

Prints can be used as part of an oppositional strategy to define *patta* paintings. However, the fact that a painter points out certain features as being incompatible with *patta* painting, does not necessarily mean that he will not use them in his own paintings. This kind of verbalisation signifies rather that a painter is aware of the conventions of *patta* painting. Hari Mahāranā (A.2.) often uses shadowing (cf. chapter 4, figure 59) in his paintings. Nevertheless this was one of the many aspects he pointed out, in a print depicting *Krishna* stealing the clothes of the *gopis* (*bastra harana*), as being inappropriate in a *patta* painting:

> "This [the print] is a modern (*adhunika*) kind of work, it is not *patta chitra*. *Shade* work has been done in the water and mountains, that kind of *shading* should not be there in *patta*. The way they are dressed...In our *patta chitra* they will be absolutely naked. The build (*gadhā*) of these figures is fat. In our [style] the waist is slim, the chest is bigger, ornaments are different, the hair of some women is tied up whereas others keep theirs loose. A *Kadamba* tree should be there, there might also be some birds such as peacocks but in general there would not be so much *seene-seenery*. [In *patta* painting] we would not show so much "far away - near by"[50] and the poses would be different. So this is a modern type (*adhunika dharanara*)".

Only a few painters object to the (direct) use of calendar prints in theory as well as in practice. Nārāyana Mahāranā from Puri, for example, looks at his collection (of photo copies) of palm leaf illustrations[51] or visits a monastery with wall paintings if he needs inspiration. Asked whether any of the prints I had brought from Madras might be useful in his work, Nārāyana said:

> "*Patta* does not have this kind of style. *Patta* is not a *natural* style. If we made the hands like this [he copied a gesture from a print] it would look *natural* but it would also be *commercial*.

This statement contradicts the dominant view amongst painters that *pattas* must comply with what is physically plausible. Like Binod Mahāranā (G.), Nārāyana has had a close contact with local art specialists and it is likely that this connection to a more semanticized part of the art world has influenced Nārāyana's perception and way of talking about *pattas*.

Among local art specialists the term "commercial" denotes inferior quality (see chapter 6). Nārāyana's reflection indicates how the conceptions of the upper layers of the art world permeate conceptions at the local level. As we shall see in chapter 7 the (unequally distributed) penetration of ideas of art specialists results in fractions at the local level.

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50 There is no Oriya word for perspective. The painters refer to the phenomenon saying "*durare pākhare*" which means "far away-near by".

51 Among other things he has photo copies of some of the palm leafs depicted in a book written by Professor Eberhard Fischer and Dr. Dinanath Pathy (1990).

It should be noted, however, that all painters, with the possible exception of one or two, would accede to use elements from prints if they received an order which required this.

Photographs: Memoirs and Sources of Inspiration

Despite the influence of prints, murals and scholars' books on *patta* paintings, an artists' own photographic record is the major stimulus when a painter is in need of ideas. There are at least two reasons why photographs of *patta* have come to play an increasing role in the production of paintings. All independent painters keep a photo album with a collection of what he considers his best and/or biggest works. Firstly an album comes in handy when customers come to place an order. As it is not possible to keep a stock of bigger paintings (most painters cannot even afford to keep a stock of smaller paintings), the album provides the potential buyer with a range of possible motifs. Secondly, some painters have difficulties remembering all the (possible) illustrations in the so called "story paintings" (cf. chapter 3, pp. 190-193) and, therefore, do not hesitate to spend Rs. 30 to go to the local photo studio in Chandanpur to have new paintings photographed[52].

The role photographs play for painters was particularly evident after the inauguration, at hotel May Fair in Puri, of a painting made by the painter Bijoy Kumar Parida (H.) from Bhubaneshwar. This painting depicted the car festival in a realist style[53]. Within a few weeks after the painting had been displayed, several painters in Raghurājpur had got orders for similar

52 I realised just how important photographs are when I once, by mistake, gave some copies of a photograph to a painter who was not the maker of the painting. The latter was very upset because his painting would now be copied by other painters.

53 The painting had been ordered by the owner of the hotel who wanted a motif the majority of guests could relate to. As almost all visitors will have heard of the car festival, this was an obvious choice.

paintings. None of them however knew how to go about this and it was therefore crucial for them to get hold of a photograph.

There are several possible reasons why painters preferred to have a photograph rather than undertake the journey to the hotel. Firstly, there is, of course, the cost of travel to Puri and the time spent going there. Secondly, most painters would feel uncomfortable entering an expensive hotel and might actually be thrown out. Thirdly, a photograph would make it easier to copy the unfamiliar realist style in which the painting was made.

The popularity of photographs, among painters, as reminders or sources of inspiration (which began 10-15 years ago and is flourishing) affects the painting activity as well as the style of painting. As indicated there is a tendency to keep photographs of larger rather than smaller paintings and an album therefore often conveys an erroneous impression of the general production.

Moreover diverse paintings appear alike when reproduced in an album. One of the effects of photographic reproduction, says Malraux, is that "works or art lose their relative proportions: a miniature bulks as large as a full-size picture.." (1990:21). The chances of a tourist ordering a large and/or rare painting increase significantly if s(he) is confronted with an album.

It is reasonable to assume that painters have never been able to afford to retain the paintings they have produced (other than on the very rare occasions when a household use a *patta* for worship). If this is correct, it follows that two orders for a painting of, say, *Rādhākrishna*, would always materialise slightly differently[54]; i.e. the painter might paint two cows as

54 It could be argued that two paintings (even if they are painted copies of the same photograph) never can be the same. Here I use "different" to refer to characteristics such as the making, in painting A, of a border, pose or back ground decoration distinct from those which are part of painting B. In other words differences which are obvious to the eye of the beholder, if (s)he was to see both paintings at the same time.

background decoration in the first order (A) and peacocks or other birds in the second (B) or less obvious, perhaps, choose different borders. However, if a painter uses a photograph of painting A to paint painting B, the chances are that painting B will bear a greater fidelity to painting A than if he had painted from memory.

It would be tempting to assume that the popularity of photographs will necessarily result in the ossification of the painting tradition. This, however, does not seem to be the case. Photographs are, in fact, a medium which makes the quick and relatively cheap dissemination of ideas possible. An example is the spread of the so called "Buguda style" which in the last part of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s has been very popular. Very few painters have, in fact, seen the murals in the "Viranchinarayana" temple at Buguda, but they have nevertheless been influenced by the long, slim figures characteristic of this style.

The style was introduced by the *Chitrakāra* Binod Mahāranā (G.) who in 1987 was paid by the Lalit Kala Akademy to copy some wall paintings in Buguda (see chapter 6)[55]. Binod Mahāranā's style of painting is heavily influenced by his stay at Buguda in 1987. The paintings which resulted from his stay were and are well-liked, and due to popular demand, Binod had to ask different painters to help him produce the paintings. His former apprentice Ramesh Mahāranā assisted him and when Ramesh left Binod to return to his household in Puri he was thus familiar with the style, which he taught his students.

In Dānda Sāhi it was Arjunā Mahāranā (E.2.1.) who introduced the style. Knowing that Arjunā was a highly skilled painter, Binod had asked him to make some "Buguda style" paintings and provided Arjunā with an example.

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55 A striking parallel to the promotion, in the last part of the 19th century and the early 20th century, of the Ajanta paintings as ideals to be emulated by Indian artists (Guha-Thakurta 1992:154, 180, 199, 236).

After Arjunā had completed the order he had a photograph taken, which would make it possible for him to accept orders for paintings made in this style. In Raghurājpur Dīnabandhu Mahāpātra (I.2.3.1.) introduced this style. Like Binod he teaches at the Training Centre in Bhubaneshwar and has been influenced by Binod's way of painting. For painters who have not worked with Binod, a photograph will at least provide them with some information on how a particular pose might be depicted.

For painters, there are certain features which define *patta* painting such as pose, lack of shadow and depth, and the flow of lines. However, an awareness of these characteristics does not hinder the introduction of perspective or shadow, if that is perceived as enhancing the chance of sale. In general, there does not seem to be any pervasive hierarchical perception and stigmatisation of new visual fields as sources of inspiration. When I asked Kālucharana Bārika (K.) whether painters ought to see murals and other kinds of Indian art, he responded, as recorded above, by pointing out a calendar print on his wall as a possible source of inspiration. Those painters who **do** reject the use of prints, in practice, as well as in theory have, without exception, worked in close collaboration with local art specialists. This dismissal and disparagement could therefore be an indicator of the permeation of ideas from a higher level of the art world to the local level.

Conclusion

With this chapter I have aimed to show how painters, when evaluating *patta* paintings, are concerned with the degree to which a painting can be said to replicate ideal models, as well as the technical skill with which a painting has been executed. I have suggested that generally replication, rather than innovation, is sought after. Only a few of the painters who paint for the market, rather than *Brahmin* patrons, aim to innovate and go beyond the conventions of *patta* paintings. In general, these painters live in the capital

and interact with members of the local elite through their work. The painters are likely to have got jobs in the Training Centre and the Handicraft Complex precisely because of their innovative skills which separate them from the majority of painters. These skills are, of course, affirmed and enhanced through their positions and interaction with the local elite.

In order to evaluate a painting, painters enquire who the producer(s) is (are), and thus, contextually determine the significance of paintings through the identity of the artist(s) and a network of social relations. This is one of the aspects which characterises and distinguishes the painters' evaluations from those of the local and national elite. The discussion of the commentaries on *patta* paintings showed how evaluations privilege an every day reality. It was therefore not surprising that when viewing European paintings, "realism" was privileged over abstract art. I have suggested that this might also be related to a cognitive difficulty in reading unfamiliar art forms. The painters' refusal of the kind of disinterested or "pure" gaze which is the basis of a Kantian aesthetic has a striking parallel in Bourdieu's discussion of the aesthetic perceptions of the working class in France. One of my aims with this section was to show how the painters' judgements are contextual without being thoroughly relativistic for they are framed within a specific Orissan paradigm of appreciation.

Other visual fields help painters to define *patta* paintings, but are also sources of inspiration. The majority of painters make use of elements from other visual fields if they find them beautiful, whether they are old Orissan palm leaves or Madras calendar prints. There does not seem to be a hierarchical perception of the suitability of visual fields as possible inspirational sources. In this matter, as in others, the conceptions of the majority of painters are distinct from those of art specialists. This is one of the central themes of the following chapter.

Chapter 6
Elite Discourses
on Authentic Craftsmanship

The first section of this chapter is concerned with elite discourses on Indian arts and crafts. It consists of two parts, of which the first looks at conceptions of crafts amongst the local elite in Orissa, and the second at conceptions of craft amongst some of the people belonging to the national craft elite. As we move from the local to the national elite, the assignment of value become increasingly more semantized.

The second section is concerned with the manifestation of the elite's aesthetic criteria in the form of awards given for skill in craft making. The requirements; the painters response to these; and the influence of awards on local social relations are some of the themes discussed.

Section I
Local Elite[1] Discourses on Arts and Crafts

A number of people, representing government institutions in Orissa, are involved in different aspects of local craft production. The institutions, their representatives and their ideas of crafts are discussed to give an idea of the various demands facing a contemporary *patta* painter. The people presented belong to different layers, or worlds, of the same art world (cf. Introduction, p. 16-17) - some are concerned with economic aspects of production and

1 Local elite refers to regionally based academics and educated government officials who work in the fields of arts and crafts. Painters employed as teachers at the Training Centre are not included in this category.

others with "pure" aesthetics only - and have distinct ideas about what ideal craftsmanship is. The representations here are constructed on the basis of interviews and discussions which took place during my fieldwork at various places and times in 1992 and winter 1994.

The Directorate of Industries

For some government institutions involved in handicrafts, the main concern is the economics of craft production. When I met Mr. Chinmay Basu in 1992 in Bhubaneshwar, he had recently been appointed to the post of Director of Orissa's Directorate of Handicrafts & Cottage Industries[2].

According to Basu, diversification in *patta* painting is necessary if the craft is to survive. It was his opinion that production would come to an end if craftsmen adhered too closely to "tradition". The painters should therefore broaden the range of motifs and include "natural elements" (such as deer for example) rather than restricting themselves to painting mythological aspects. In addition to the paintings made solely for decorative purposes, the painters should also produce images suitable for reproduction by national companies for use in calendars.

This policy, which stresses utility and everyday usefulness, determines much of the contemporary production of crafts in Orissa. This was apparent from Mr. Basu's desk, on which pens were placed in a *Ganesh*-pen-holder, a carved stone paper-weight kept papers in place and an elephant was offered to smokers as an ash tray.

When discussing awards, Mr. Basu said that neither he nor the people working for the Directorate ever have anything to do with the choice of recipients of awards. He pointed out that people in his position working for

2 The institution comes under the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India (GOI).

the government are transferred to a new post every eighteen months, for which reason they never become experts but have a general knowledge. Mr. Basu had never had anything to do with arts and crafts before he got the post in the Directorate in 1992.

One of the topics discussed was the so called "square inch" system which is the contemporary basis for the pricing of paintings. Basu explained that the Directorate as a representative of the government cannot set its rates according to the degree of workmanship. One of the reasons is the risk that some craftsmen might blame the organisation for favouring particular craftsmen.

The actual sale of handicrafts is the responsibility of the "Orissa State Co-operative Handicraft Corporation Limited", an institution under the Directorate of Industries[3]. One of the attractions of selling through the Handicrafts Corporation is that it does not try to press the price below the agreed minimum[4]. According to Basu, one of the fundamental problems facing the corporation is the actual cost of production[5]. The corporation has to take bank loans at a rate of 21% in order to manage the cost of the time delay from the point of production to that of sale. Unless items are sold quickly, all the Corporation's profit are consumed by the interest on loans. This forces the Directorate and its sub-institutions to be extremely perceptive about changes in market demand.

This layer of the art world looks at craft production from an economic point of view. What is of primary importance to the institution is to ensure that the sale of crafts takes place. Mr. Basu and the people working in the Directorate have in general a relatively open mind when it comes to the

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3 The outlet of the corporation is known as Utkalikā.

4 Nevertheless many craftsmen prefer to sell through local middlemen (see chapter 7).

5 See chapter 2, figure 10 for information on the structure of the handicraft organisations.

aesthetics of craft production. Traditional designs are fine as long as they sell well. When and if they fail to be popular the time has come to adjust the design to contemporary market demands.

The State Handicraft Design Centre

Two of the institutions financed by the Directorate of Industries are the State Institute of Handicraft Training (Training Centre) and the State Handicraft Design Centre (Handicraft Complex), both situated in Bhubaneshwar.

At the Handicraft Complex, established in 1954-55, I occasionally met with the Deputy Manager Mr. Sarat Chandra Mahanty. I once showed him a photograph of a painting depicting a village scene (see chapter 3, figure 52) made by Bhikārī Mahāranā, who worked as a Master Craftsman in the Handicraft Complex.

Mahanty recognised the painting as the work of Bhikārī; the idea, however, was his, rather than Bhikārī's. Part of Mahanty's work was to develop new themes and ways of working in order to adjust handicrafts to the requirements of the contemporary market. Mahanty had asked Bhikārī to depict a village scene perspectively in a naturalistic style. Mahanty, however, found the similarity in size of the cows amusing when compared to the decreasing size of the houses. The fish border was dismissed as unfitting because it had no relation to the subject.

As we saw earlier in chapter 3, some contemporary paintings reveal the westernising influences first apparent in the work of Ravi Varma[6]. Mahanty did not find any reason to object to paintings having perspective, chequered

6 Ravi Varma (1848-1906) has been described as "a modern among the traditionalists and a traditionalist among the moderns". An artist who "provides a vital link between the traditional Indian art and the contemporary, between the Tanjore School and the Western Academic Realism" (Sharma and Chawla 1993:11).

marble floors, European columns, or Moghul lamps. He was aware that his opinion would be considered controversial by several of the local art specialists. According to Mahanty a *patta* having any of the above listed features would be rejected in an award competition. The reason was, according to Mahanty, that awards are given by the All India Handicraft Board (AIHB) which was set up in order to make sure that the handicraft traditions of the different states would be maintained (see chapter 2 for further information). A black and white marble floor, for example, was not likely to be accepted because the committee would perceive it as a foreign intrusion.

The most obvious effect of the Handicraft Complex, as far as *pattas* are concerned, was - as we saw in chapter 3 - the development of a design which introduced the idea of chronological illustrations. This "story-painting" design has been adopted by the *patta* painters and is very popular among Indian as well as foreign tourists. The chronological order of illustrations and the inherent idea of linear time have affected the way most contemporary painters look at paintings. This was apparent in the reactions of painters when they were shown a *patta* depicting a scene from the wall paintings found in the palace of Dharakote (see chapter 3, figure 43).

The central motif illustrates Arjuna aiming his arrow, *Gāndiba*, at *Nabagunjara*, until he realises it is a form of *Visnu* and therefore prostrates himself. Almost all painters (in Puri, Raghurājpur, Dānda Sāhi and Bhubaneshwar) agreed that it was confusing that two temporal events occurred within one frame.

The State Institute of Handicraft Training

Several painters in the Puri district have undertaken the first part of their training in the State Institute of Handicraft Training (or the Training Centre as it is popularly called) in Bhubaneshwar. Through the Directorate of

Industries, the State Government has financed handicraft training centres in several places in Orissa. The one in Bhubaneshwar, which opened in 1964, has 260 students divided into 13 different craft departments[7].

Each year ten new students are accepted into each craft section for a two year course and ten are expected to complete the course for which they receive a certificate. However, not everybody completes the course and therefore do not obtain a certificate. From 1966 to 1990 only 59% completed the course. The certificates are crucial because they enhance a painters chance of obtaining loans from the government's District Industries Centre (DIC) (cf. chapter 2, figure 10).

If a student complete his/her course at the Training Centre to the satisfaction of the teachers and the Principal (s)he will be permitted to progress to an advanced course (another two years) at the Handicraft Complex. While students at the Training Centre in 1991 got 55 rupees per month as a stipend, the students at the Handicraft Complex got 250 rupees. This high stipend is made possible because their products are sold through government institutions. In order to be accepted as a student at the Training Centre, one must past an oral as well as a practical (drawing) test. Handicapped people have first priority and people of *Chitrakāra jāti* have second priority.

At the time of my second stay in Orissa Mr. Chandra Sekhar Rao was the Principal of the Training Centre. While discussing the photograph of the village scene (chapter 3, figure 52), Rao and I were joined by Binod Mahāranā (G.) and Benudhara Mahāpātra (C.1.-b-i-l.), both of whom teach at the Training Centre, and later Kanungo, the secretary of the regional branch of the Lalit Kala Akademi. Rao did not like the painting (photograph) because it lacked "rhythm" and could not be classified as

7 Some of the crafts taught are *patta* painting, palm leaf engraving, stone carving, wood carving, lacquered boxes and toys, papier mâché, and applique.

either a modern picture poster or a traditional *patta*[8]. He noticed that the background on the left side abruptly stopped, leaving sky where there should have been ground. It was not the village scene itself Rao objected to, but the way it was depicted.

According to Rao, art will always be a mirror of society and therefore reflects change. He exemplified his point by stating that the time of the ox carriage has gone and people nowadays travel by bus, train or plane. There was therefore nothing wrong in depicting these means of transport in contemporary *pattas*. He found it difficult to understand why anybody should object to black and white chequered marble floors in a painting.

The painter Binod Mahāranā objected stating that the chequered floors were not Odissi and therefore should not be included in *pattas*. Having discussed this at length with Rao, he conceded that the chequered floors were all right if made in grey and black, but a combination of white and black would dominate a painting to the detriment of the central focus, namely the figures. Benudhara Mahāpātra disagreed saying that black and white chequered floors were all right and should never be a hindrance in the giving of an award. He agreed, however, with Binod on the issue of perspective which he thought should not be introduced in *patta* painting.

In contrast to both painters, Kanungo was of the opinion that perspective can be introduced in *patta* without harming the craft. He still found, however, that the painting depicting the village scene had been "lost", but that was due to the combination of modern houses and Odissi figures rather than the attempt at perspective.

The common characteristic of the three institutions mentioned so far and the ideas of their representatives is an attitude to traditional crafts which allows

8 It is a well known phenomenon and often described in the anthropological literature, that objects which cross boundaries of classification are often the cause of concern (Douglas 1973).

for an introduction of new elements. The basis of this is an ideology which gives priority to the market and its demands.

The Lalit Kala Akademi

The Lalit Kala Akademi is another institution which has come to play a considerable role in the local *patta* art world. This is often not acknowledged by local government officials because the Akademi officially is responsible only for the sphere of arts - and amongst the local elite *patta* painting is, in general, categorised as a "craft". The Akademi presents awards for *patta* paintings which go beyond conventional conceptions and motifs. According to the Akademi, these can be said to belong to the sphere of arts rather than crafts.

The Akademi is a self-governing body which depends on State government grants. The institution organises promotional activities for the artists via competitions, exhibitions, publishing books etc. It was opened in Orissa in 1965 and is a member of the central Lalit Kala Akademi in Delhi. Among other things the Akademi deals with applications from craftsmen for pensions (Rs. 300 per month). If the Akademi approves of the application it will be recommended to the Director of Culture, Government of Orissa (GOO), who finances the pension scheme. It can also recommend a craftsman for a state pension which amounts to Rs. 1000 per month. Of greater importance (to this study) than pension programmes, however, is the Akademi's involvement in the development of *patta* painting. This is consciously done by presenting awards to *patta* painters who are thought to have made an outstanding contribution to the field.

What ought to be mentioned here, however, is a project which, when it was undertaken, was not thought to be particularly relevant to *patta* painting, but nevertheless has had a profound influence upon the contemporary style of painting. As mentioned in chapter 5 in 1987 the Lalit Kala Akademi sent

Binod Mahāranā (G.) to Viranchinarayana temple, Buguda, for two months. The purpose was to acquire copies of the deteriorating wall paintings before they disappeared. Binod Mahāranā, the instructor in palm leaf carving at the Training Centre also had an interest in *pattas*. He was a great admirer of the wall paintings he had been sent to copy and soon began to paint *pattas* using the motifs and style he had found on the temple walls (cf. chapter 3, figures 38 and 38a). Amongst contemporary *patta* painters Binod was considered the best. This factor (as well as an increasing demand for paintings done in his style) might be one of the reasons why so many have started to copy the style he developed during and after his stay in Buguda.

In retrospect Kanungo, the secretary of the Akademi, considered the experiment a great success and explained why he thought it was important for painters to see the Buguda wall paintings:

> "Whereas the wall paintings in the *Jagannātha* temple [Puri] are rough - a sort of folk painting - the wall paintings found in Buguda are characterised by their fine lines. That is why the artists of Puri can benefit from seeing the art of Ganjam".

According to Kanungo, painters ought to see temples all over Orissa as a necessary inspiration to develop and improve their art. They should also go to Rajasthan to see miniature painting, to Ajanta[9] to see the famous rock paintings and to other places to see different kinds of art.

Like the previously mentioned institutions Lalit Kala Akademi does not object to the introduction of elements from outside the sphere of *patta* painting[10]. However, the ideology behind the policy of this institution is distinct from that of the other institutions. Rather than economics it is "aesthetics" which determines the activities of the Akademi. While possible

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9 Ajanta has, throughout the century, been held up as an example of artistic brilliance (see for example Guha-Thakurta 1992:173).

10 As far as the ideas of the secretary fit with the policy of the Akademi.

new elements were left undefined by the Directorate of Industries, the State institute of Handicraft Training and the State Handicraft Design Centre, the secretary representing the local Lalit Kala Akademi had a clear idea of the styles from which elements could be borrowed with success. Out of a whole range of possible visual fields Kanungo picked the wall paintings in Buguda, the Ajanta rock paintings and Rajasthani miniature paintings as possible sources of inspiration. The former have been used in the promotion of Orissa in tourist brochures, while the latter two played a profound role in the making of an "Indian" art in the late 19th and early 20th century[11].

Orissa's Crafts Council

Orissa's Craft Council represented quite a contrast to the different institutions discussed so far. It was a voluntary, unpaid organisation which primarily existed for idealistic motives. A group of intellectuals founded the institution in the late 1980s in order to improve what they saw as a general deterioration in the quality of Orissan handicrafts. This was seen to be the result of the focus on the demands of the market place and an increasing concern with money amongst the craftsmen. One of the aims of the Council was to influence the adjustment to the market to ensure that "tradition" would not be left behind.

The perspective of one of the initiators, the leader of the Crafts Council Dr. B. K. Ratha, Department of Archaeology, GOO put him in line with earlier figures such as Birdwood and Coomaraswamy (cf. chapter 2, pp. 102-107). Dr. Ratha described himself as a traditionalist, something which is indicated in his comment to me when we first met:

> "The basic thing, tell me, why have you come from London to study *patta chitra*? "Because" [he answered himself]... "you have not come here to study calendar prints or laminated modern photographs - it [*patta* painting] is a craft which has a traditional value, it has a peculiarity; that is why you have

11 For a discussion of this see Guha-Thakurta (1992) and Mitter (forthcoming).

> come. So those particular things which attracted you from the very beginning if they are gradually lost, then what happens?".

During two interviews in the Autumn of 1992 and winter 1994, Dr. Ratha expressed his concern about the contemporary situation in which *patta* paintings have become a tourist commodity and stressed that he, as an archaeologist, wants traditional values to be maintained[12]. Some recent introductions, he said, such as certain new themes, colours, and in particular luminous colours would have to be eradicated if the tradition of *patta* is not to loose its connection with history - and according to Dr. Ratha, it is the continuity with the past which has made Orissan craft famous. This kind of modernisation, he said, would - if allowed to continue - change the tradition to such an extent that in twenty years time there would be nothing worthy of the name *patta chitra.*

As an example, Dr. Ratha mentioned how a *patta* painter had recently painted a railway station using perspective[13]. The motif as well as the attempted perspective, very likely inspired by calendar prints, were, according to Dr. Ratha, unacceptable in a *patta.* So was an introduction of elements characteristic of Moghul paintings for example. Such elements spoilt the purity of the Odissi style.

Dr. Ratha has been associated with the selection for national awards and explained why he had had to reject an otherwise excellent work:

> "Once there was a palm leaf illustration submitted by an artist depicting *Raga mala.* It was made beautifully in black and white. However, on the cover he had painted a number of musical instruments including a harmonium and a tabla. I objected to that, because a harmonium can never go with the ancient conception of *Raga* paintings. Had he illustrated *ghazals* it would have been o.k".

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12 These interviews were conducted in English and quotations are therefore original, i.e. not my translations.

13 Unfortunately I did not see this painting, nor have I ever seen a *patta* depicting a railway.

When I remarked that some people might argue that no harm had been done, as harmonia nowadays are commonly used as accompaniment to raga singers, Dr. Ratha said:

> "I don't blame the artist, he is not properly educated. ...You know from your study that the *guru sisya parampara* has gone, so has the sketch book tradition, as Dr. Pathy calls it. The most important thing, however, is that *gurus* are not proper *gurus* - they don't have the knowledge of scriptures".

Dr. Ratha felt that the Training Centre ought to coach the trainees in mythology, sanskrit *slokas*, Hindu religion, and Orissan art and architecture to provide them with a broad idea of the cultural wealth of Orissa:

> "...they can draw from that source and instead of purchasing a print from the market, if in that class they are taught that, they can go to a library and get a xerox of the photograph, then take the motif".

Dr. Ratha's work is concerned with the restoration of Orissa's ancient architecture. He sees the temples of Orissa and their sculptures as possible rich sources of inspiration for *patta* painters and preferable to television programmes or prints:

> "You can have hundreds of varieties of *Ganesh* in stone sculptures in Orissa. If an artist knows that, he can employ it. The question is how to teach him about these hundreds of varieties.... Instead of *Ganesh* there should not be *Mahābhāratha Krishna* of the TV serial or a portrait of Mahatma Gandhi on the *patta*"....I have a tendency to be more traditional in my approach and outlook - and why not? When we have such a vast range of traditional motifs and sculptures, why go for a calendar print?".

Asked whether he often thinks of Orissan sculptures when looking at *patta*, Dr. Ratha said:

> "As I told you if I am to purchase a *patta* painting, I will try to purchase a real *patta* painting. A real one....The motif should be a traditional motif, the colour, the ground, it should be a genuine *patta chitra*....[A genuine *patta chitra*] uses a motif traditional to Orissan art, either in sculptural art, murals, or in palm leaf, that is my way of looking at it".

Going through the *pattas* I had brought, (discussed in chapter 5, section I) Dr. Ratha pointed out the *jātri patti* (cf. chapter 3, figure 27) as an example

of a "real *patta*" painting. When told it was made by one of the old women in the village of Raghurājpur, Dr. Ratha said:

> "That is why it looks pure, because she has not been influenced by modern things, she knows about the use of colours, that is why she has applied those colours. She has not worked as for the demand of customers, she has put the right colours. This was the original thing".

To Dr. Ratha the introduction of new themes in *patta* is acceptable only if they can be said to adhere to what he describes as "the Orissan tradition". He found that the *patta* paintings, produced at a workshop at the B.K. College of Art and Craft, were praise-worthy examples of how the tradition of *patta* painting can benefit from using motifs and themes from other Orissan visual fields.

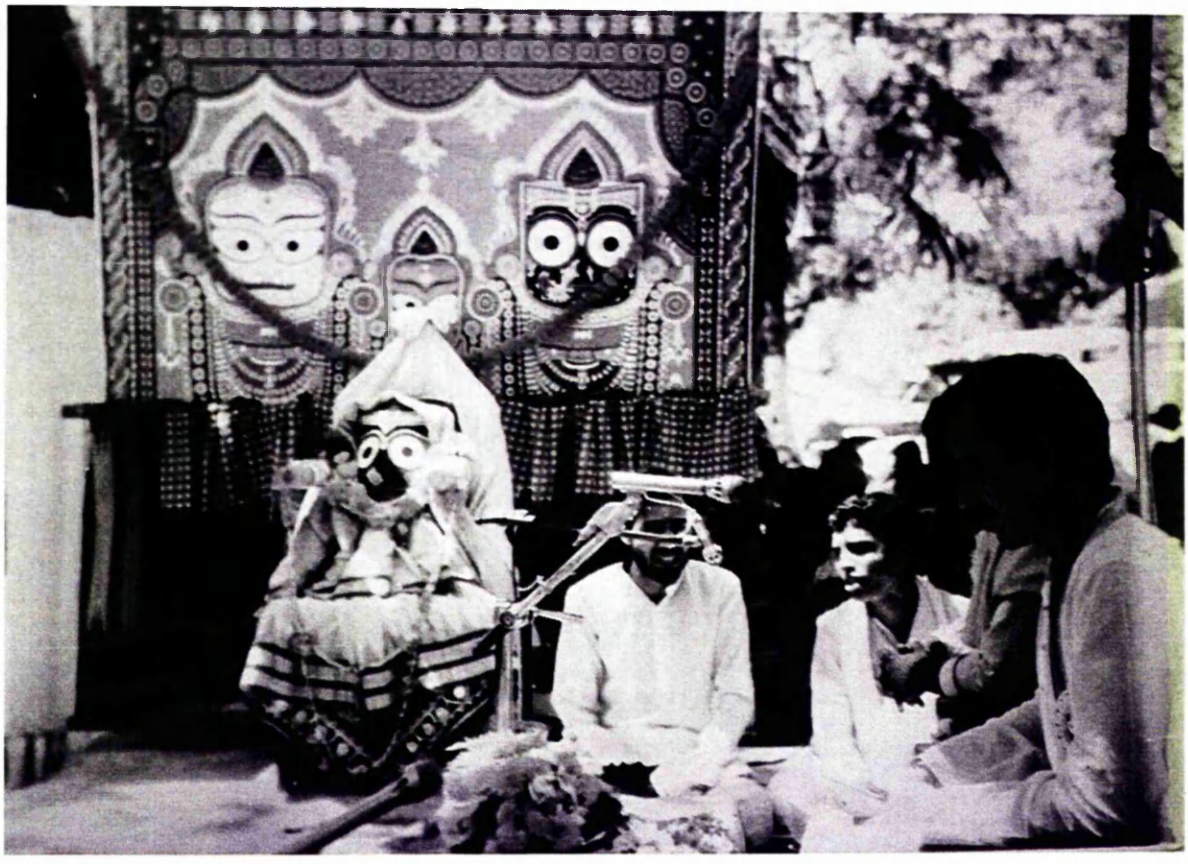
When he spoke about beauty, Dr. Ratha used a Sanskritic notion which closely paralleled the western concept rooted in a Kantian aesthetic, characterised by a disinterested appreciation. His perception of *patta* paintings was characterised by a strong idea about what a genuine *patta* is: it must be made with a limited number of primary colours, the themes must be traditionally Orissan, and, neither the use of perspective nor the use of shade are acceptable. He valued *pattas* with a view to their aesthetic value, in this context understood in the narrow sense concerning "beauty" per se, as well as their correspondence to "traditional" *patta* painting.

His notion of tradition did not therefore allow for integration of elements from other styles of painting or indeed anything he would consider "modern". Dr. Ratha's viewpoints clashed with those of the Directorate of Industries, an institution for which the major concern, I have suggested, is the fulfilment of market demands.

In 1987 the Crafts Council planned a *patta chitra* festival in collaboration with the late Bhāgabata Mahāranā (C.2.), a *patta* painter who taught at the Handicraft Complex. The purpose of the festival was to broaden the interest in *patta* paintings and to encourage Orissan *patta* painters. They were

invited to participate in the festival and the subsequent seminar, which were both held in the village of Raghurājpur[14].

Figure 86: The *Māhārājā* of Puri inaugurate the "*Patta Chitra* Festival", Raghurājpur 1987.



The Crafts Council, AIHB and the Directorate of Handicrafts & Cottage Industries sponsored the festival with a grant of 75000 rupees. It was a successful event, inaugurated by the *Māhārājā* of Puri worshipping the village goddess *Bhuāsuni*[15] (see figure 86). The Chief minister of Orissa

14 Different factors played a role in the choice of Raghurājpur rather than Dānda Sāhi. First of all the village was known due to the Master Craftsman Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.) who had received a national award in 1965, but the fact that Bhāgabata Mahāranā was born in the village of Raghurājpur may also have influenced the decision.

15 Describing the festival, Dr. Dinanath Pathy stressed that the *Māhārājā* had been asked to worship *Bhuāsuni* rather than *Jagannātha* because *Chitrakāras* worship the former rather than the latter in their homes. That might once have been the case, but today they worship both

gave a speech in which he declared Raghurājpur to be a Crafts Village. He furthermore stressed how important it was that the Orissan *patta chitra* tradition was continued and claimed that Raghurājpur was a source of pride to the state. Several prominent people had been invited to participate in the festival. Among the guests were the famous dancer Kelucharan Mahāpātra[16], his student Pratimā Bedi[17], the dancer Sanjuta and her husband the musician Ragunāth Pani Grāhi. The majority of the local elite, discussed in this part of the chapter, attended as did the press: Raghurājpur found its way into the media. Soon after the festival Raghurājpur was included in the government produced tourist guide and the larger hotels began to arrange trips to the village (see figure 87).

One of the members of the Crafts Council, Dr. Dinanath Pathy[18] regrets the festival, which according to him has "lead to the contemporary state of affairs where the village is spoiled". Another member felt that the Crafts Council ruined the village 10-11% with the festival[19]. Other incidents, such as the visit of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) some months after the festival, ruined what had remained. Dr. Ratha had asked INTACH to pay the villagers Rs. 10,000 in order that they could clean up the village, present the guests with coconuts and work in front of their houses when the INTACH team arrived from the Hotel Ashok in Bhubaneshwar in air conditioned cars. The problem, as far as Dr. Pathy

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deities.

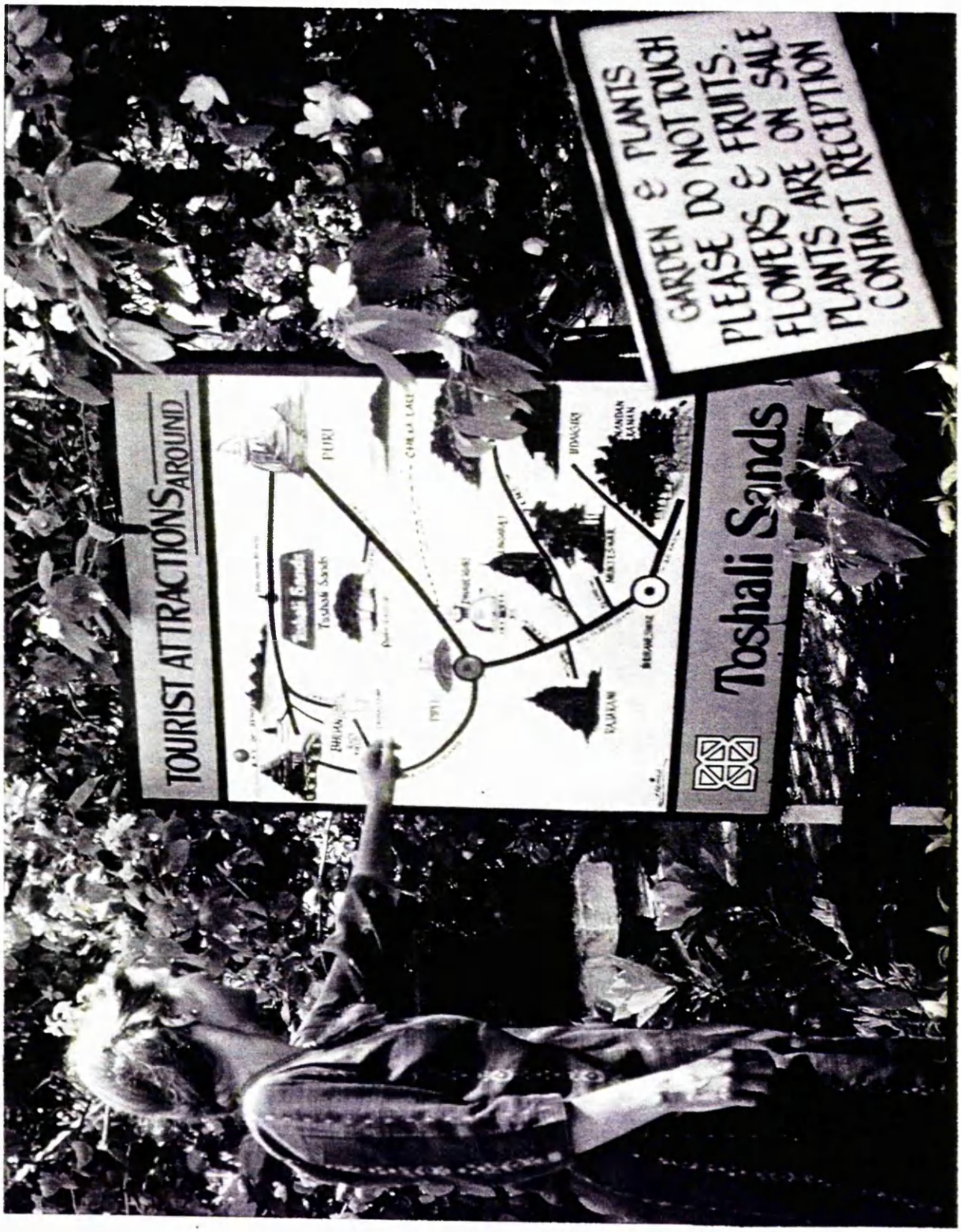
16 Kelucharan Mahāpātra was born in Raghurājpur but has moved to Bhubaneshwar.

17 Pratima Bedi was formerly a film star and now has a dance āshrama.

18 Dr. Dinanath Pathy has written one of his two doctorates on Orissan paintings. In 1991-2 he was the principal of the B.K. Art college of Art and crafts, Bhubaneshwar. During my fieldwork Dr. Pathy was always generous with his time when we conducted discussions in his office. English was the medium in which we communicated and all quotes are therefore original.

19 The figure 10-11 % is not the result of careful calculation but simply a way of saying that the Crafts Council has part of the responsibility for the development which has taken place in the village of Raghurājpur.

Figure 87: Raghurājpur as a tourist attractions, Hotel Toshali Sands, Puri 1991.



was concerned was the money given to the villagers - ever since the INTACH visit, money has been a major preoccupation of the villagers.

Dr. Pathy has been actively involved in the development of *patta* paintings, and was one of the key figures behind the establishment of the Crafts Council. When I met him at his office at the B.K. Art College, I was struck by the tribal earthen plate at his desk which served as an ash tray and I recalled the elephant ash tray at the desk of Mr. Basu[20]. The ashtray signified that I had entered yet another world within the art world.

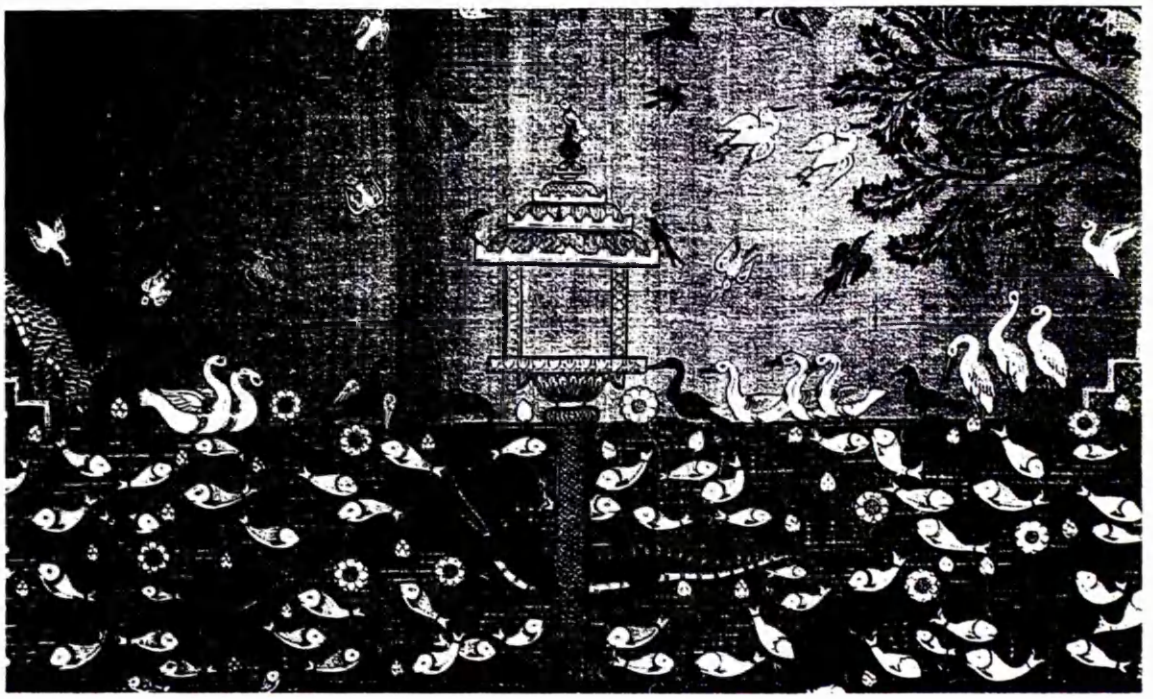
In the late 1980s the Department of Culture (GOO) supported a three month *patta* study unit lead by Dr. Pathy at the B.K. College of Art and Crafts. The purpose of the study was to create new designs and bring about a major change in thematic and stylistic contents to update *patta* painting to the demands of contemporary society. Two traditional *Chitrakāras*, Nārāyana Mahāranā (C.1.-s-i-l.) from Puri and Purusottam Mahāpātra originally from Raghurājpur but now settled in Bhubaneshwar, were invited to work with teachers and students at the college. In the subsequent leaflet published in connection with the workshop, Dr. Pathy describes some of the aims and results of the workshop.

One of the major findings resulting from the workshop was the replacement of the traditional carrier *patti* with *tassar*. In contrast to the time consuming preparation of *patti*, *tassar* can be purchased ready-made. Themes, compositions and colour schemes were also altered. Dr. Pathy writes:

> "Attempts have been made to restrict the palette to four or five basic colours and to bring in a fusion of styles with scientific borrowing from murals, paper and palm leaf painting traditions" (Leaflet produced by B.K. Art College, n.d.).

20 In contrast to the earthen plate the elephant, which has no relation to its function as an ash tray, is an example of the attempt by the Directorate of Industries to give otherwise purely decorative objects a utilitarian value.

Figure 88: *Patta* paintings - new concepts and designs.



The leaflet contains five examples of the paintings which were made during the three month workshop. One of them (figure 88) is clearly influenced from an old palm leaf[21], but the fluid lines of the animals also convey another source of inspiration, namely the murals in the Viranchinarayana temple at Bugudā. Dr. Pathy is a great admirer of these paintings as is evident from a leaflet produced for the Department of tourism, GOO, by B.K. College of Art and Crafts[22]. He writes:

> "The paintings of Viranchinarayana temple, Buguda are a landmark in the history of mural paintings" (no pagination).

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21 depicted in a book written by Dr. Eberhard Fischer in collaboration with Dr. Pathy (1990).

22 Several leading representatives of the global art worlds such as Deborah Swallow from the Victoria and Albert Museum and Eberhard Fischer have been taken by Pathy to see the murals.

According to Dr. Pathy contemporary *patta* production has several problems, one of which is related to the limited themes which centre around the cult of *Jagannātha* and *Krishnaleelā*. New themes have to be introduced if *patta* painting is to survive as a craft form. In the leaflet, Dr. Pathy writes:

> "Because of limited thematic representations and due to want of innovative ideas, the *pata*[23] paintings have reached a state of stagnation... The artistic ingenuity which was once the hallmark of the *pata* painting is now lacking.... The decadence in the style and creative expression has already set in and unless attempts are made it may end up as kitsch" (Pathy n.d.).

In winter 1994, Dr. Pathy explained that by "kitschy" he meant *patta* paintings made with elements from calendar prints, for example, in order to fulfil popular demand[24]. Dr. Pathy found, not surprisingly, that the introduction of new colours and the tendency to increasingly decorate the paintings was another problem and a consequence of the government promotion which treated *patta* as a handicraft product and widened the market.

To Dr. Pathy it was the painters' orientation towards a new market and their concern with earning an income which was one of the most fundamental problems in contemporary production. Dr. Pathy was not the only art specialist from the Crafts Council who questioned the craftsmens' market orientation. In some unpublished articles art specialist X describes how the working patterns of the *Chitrakāras* have taken a turn towards "pure business orientation". Through the government's Handicraft organisations *patta* painting has "come out of the limits of the temple and travelled into the drawing rooms, conference halls and hotels". According to X this has resulted in a decreasing quality and a deterioration of the style, he writes:

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23 *Pata* here refers to *patta* paintings. This way of spelling *patta* might be an attempt to adjust to the way the cloth paintings are spelled in parts of North India.

24 Kitsch is originally a German term and denotes tawdry, vulgarised or pretentious art. The integration of the German concept in English language reflects perhaps how this local art tradition has affected other regional traditions and ways of looking at art.

> "The paintings have become stereotyped, stale and more and more decorative. The *Chitrakāras* have forgotten the use of indigenous colours and resorted to poster bottle colours".

The tendency for these local art specialists to view the market orientation and the craftsmens' concern with money as a problem ought to be noted. The separation between the sphere of money from that of "art" is not an uncommon phenomenon amongst some art specialists. For artists however, the two spheres are often inseparable, as an income is necessary to continue making art.

During a discussion (1991) of the designs commonly found in the contemporary *patta* production, X mentioned to me some of the aspects he found problematic. One of the trends which he considered particularly problematic was the increasing popularity amongst *patta* painters of black and white chequered floors when, for example, painting the palace of King Ashoka or the consecration of *Rāma* (cf. chapter 3, figures 41 and 48).

According to X this type of floors came to India with the Moghuls and were copied by the kings of Orissa[25]. He therefore reasoned that the floors were not traditional Odissi style and consequently should not be presented within a "traditional art". Furthermore, he reasoned, they were not necessary, but were made in response to the painters' need to fill in empty space with any kind of decoration.

When we discussed awards X stated that a minimum requirement for a *patta* to be worthy of an award is that it be a "traditional painting". For the basic prerequisite is that a painting must be made with colours and motifs drawn from the temple murals in Orissa. From the whole field of

25 The palace in Terrakote is one of the many palaces in Orissa which has a black and white chequered floor.

traditional, religious art, X picked out the murals as an example of an authentic Orissan style and said:

> "...the *patta* paintings have become a kind of tourist commodity, [whereas] the wall paintings have remained the same....so therefore I consider them as the most authentic *patta* style".

According to X the authenticity of a *patta* depends upon colour, line and style. It is possible to introduce new themes but they must be within "traditional" parameters. It is particularly important that the number of colours used is restricted:

> "It is not necessary to use a lot of colours, it immediately makes the painting different from the traditional ones....in a good painting there aren't a lot of colours. A good modern painting also doesn't have a lot of colours in it. It is a weakness in *patta* painting to use so many".

X considered the fact that many painters copy things without knowing what they are doing a problem. He stressed the difference between ordinary painters and great masters who know what to take and when to stop and mentioned Benudhara Mahāpātra (C.1.-b-i-l.) and Binod Mahāranā (G.) (teachers at the Training Centre), as examples of painters who have successfully taken inspiration from other visual fields and thus contributed to the development of *patta* painting.

As an example of paintings which would never receive awards, X mentioned the *patta* depicting a village scene (chapter 3, figure 52) and one of the *Kurukshyetra* battlefield in the *Mahābhārata* at sunset. The former was inappropriate, according to X, because of its attempt at perspective. The latter was rejected because of the sunset which betrayed the influence of calendar prints.

During my stay in Orissa, X was kind enough to look through the *patta* paintings discussed in the previous chapter and give his opinion of the

paintings. As I was not able to be present when X saw and commented upon the *pattas* I had brought, he recorded his comments in writing. We shall now have a look at his critique of some of the paintings.

X was critical of the *patta* depicting *Krishna* and two *gopis* (cf. chapter 5, figure 64) and noted:

> "Immature lines. Faces and eyes are dull, very rough and uneven lines, no life. The drawing is not traditional. The introduction of violet colour is influenced [by] calendar prints".

When shown the same painting some painters noticed that it had in fact been made by children[26] and was therefore characterised by uneven lines. However, none of them described the painting as "not traditional", nor did they comment upon the use of violet.

Only one of the *patta* acquired a grade A on a scale ranging from A to D. That was the one depicting *Kālī* dancing on *Siva* (cf. chapter 5, figure 63) in a rage. Except for the white border, X found the *patta* "forceful, speaking of a correct mood". The lines he described as "fluid and graceful" and the colours and composition "balanced and within a traditional ambit".

X was not at all impressed with the *patta* depicting *Siva* and *Pāvartī* (cf. chapter 5, figure 66) and graded it a C. He saw in the drawing of a halo behind the couple the result of the influence of calendar prints and added that the depiction of half a lion was also not traditional. The eye of *Pārvatī* X found "dull", the feet "uninspiring" and the green ground "unimaginative". One painter also criticized the feet of *Siva*, but his use of vocabulary was different. For the painter it was simply the unevenness of the feet which was seen as a problem rather than whether they were "inspiring" or not.

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26 The sketch was made by a craftsman but the painting was completed by children.

X's comments suggest the importance which the concept of "tradition" plays in his evaluation. The composition of the only *patta* to receive a grade A was described as well balanced and made "within the traditional ambit". In contrast to this the *patta* which suffered the hardest criticism was described as not being traditional because of the introduction of a violet colour, which, according to X, was inspired by calendar prints.

A definition was here developed through what, in X's opinion, a *patta* should not be. Other visual fields such as calendar prints, but also highly specific elements such as industrially produced colours were used as negative examples and provided an aesthetic justification for his criticism of the *patta.*

Some of the concepts invoked through X's descriptive adjectives reveal a set of criteria quite different from that held by most painters. For example, he stated that the green ground in the *patta* depicting *Siva* and Pārvatī was "unimaginative" indicating that for X, painting *patta* is not simply a question of replicating existing models but demands creativity. Another striking statement which contrasts with the articulations of most painters, is X's description of the lines in the *patta* depicting *Jashodā* milking a cow (cf. chapter 5, figure 65) and the feet of *Siva* and *Pārvatī*, as "uninspiring".

This commentary might also reflect X's own engagement with representation as an abstract painter[27]. In abstract art and modernist art more generally the artist's identity is intrinsically bound to his "creativity", whereas this is most often not the case for *patta* painters. X's background in abstract art is likely to be a significant determinant of his views on *patta* paintings. Could it be that, for X, the demands of innovation in the realm of abstract art enforce the importance of safeguarding another realm as traditional and secure from innovation?

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27 More than one of the members of the Crafts Council are abstract painters.

If that is the case, X is articulating in his own public utterances what Rasheed Araeen has analyzed in global terms. He has argued that the freedom to innovate, which is implied by modernism, depends upon its negation. While the West is allowed to be "modern" - to have its art historicized by the practices of an avant-garde - the rest of the world (including artists living in the West but born elsewhere) has to stagnate in an enforced traditionalism and primitivism (1987:21-22; 1989:13).

If the art specialist actually finds it necessary to enforce a traditionalism on current *patta* painters it is surprising that his way of talking about paintings appear to be similar to that of the painters. Just like them X was concerned with technical skill, quantification and accuracy. However, the similarity remains only at a superficial level: his way of relating to the paintings was actually quite different from the painters'.

X's criticism took place in an abstract aesthetic sphere. Judgements were rooted within a conception about what an ideal *patta* is. It should be noted that the use of the word "ideal" here is different from the painters' concern with ideal pre-existing models. To pass his judgements the art specialist drew upon his knowledge of *patta* paintings and their supposedly ideal execution, reflected in the grading of the *patta* paintings. By grading the paintings with an A, B, or C, X introduced a linear scale of appreciation quite different from the kind of evaluation in which the painters contextualised paintings in order to be able to evaluate them. X did not need to contextualise the paintings in order to evaluate them. In this instance this could not, of course, have been possible because of my absence, but in other contexts where it **has** been possible, X has never privileged the identity of an artist and his particular background when evaluating a *patta*. Whereas the painters enquired about the artist and purpose of the production, X's sole concern was that of a formalist, namely

the (isolated) painting in question[28]. The contextually determined significance of paintings apparent amongst the painters was, in other words, stripped away at this cluster of the art world.

The contrast between evaluations which are based upon such formalist aesthetic essentialism on the one hand and those which are context bound on the other hand has a parallel in the clash between two cognitive models described by Cohn (1985). He argues that the conquest of India also involved a conquest of knowledge: complex forms of knowledge created by Indians were codified and transmitted by Europeans (ibid.:276). While the Indian tradition stressed embeddedness and context, the Western tradition sought to extract specific features of a phenomenon. Cohn writes:

> "When a Mughal ruler issued a farman or a parwana, it was more than an order or an entitlement. These were more than messages or, as the British construed them, a contract or right. Rather, they were a sharing, through the act of creating the document, in the authority and substance of the sender. Hence, in the drawing up of a document, a letter, a treaty, everything about it was charged with a significance which transcended what might be thought of as its practical purpose" (ibid.:279-80).

Likewise, for the painters a painting is more than simply an object to be evaluated for its aesthetic merits. It is the product of a process which has involved several persons, not only in the actual production of a painting, but also in an exchange of ideas and a marking of competence (the novice asks the skilled painter for advice).

This local elite cluster of the art world only occasionally communicates with the local painters and when it happens it is mainly in the offices of the art specialists rather than in the villages of the painters. This is, among other things, what makes it possible to reframe the cultural significance of the paintings. The art specialists are divorced from local concerns and it is precisely this separation from the interconnected practical discourses of the

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28 For a brief discussion of the formalist notion of art which had evolved by the early 20th century, see the first part of the introduction.

painters that creates the possibility of constructing this discourse. However, although the world of the local specialists is distinct from that of the painters, the local elite is nevertheless close at hand and therefore has a more persistent presence than the national specialists who only rarely come into direct contact with the craftsmen.

Inventing Meaning: Crafts in the Minds of the National Elite

While I was in Raghurājpur the Master craftsman, Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.) received a letter from the Handicrafts and Cottage Industries Department, Government of Orissa. The letter informed him about the forthcoming visit of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) team led by Mrs. Pupul Jayakar, who will be introduced below[29]. A small exhibition of Handlooms and Handicrafts was to be organised for inspection by the team and for discussion in the subsequent "seminar-cum-interaction with artisans".

The Handicraft Exhibition and Seminar

There was an excited atmosphere in the Handicraft Complex while the organisers and the craftsmen waited for the arrival of Jayakar and Rajiv Sethi[30]. Craftsmen from the villages of Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi and the capital, Bhubaneshwar, had come to exhibit their paintings and join the seminar which was to follow. Among the local intelligentsia and

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29 The purpose of the team's visit was to formulate an employment- generating three year action plan "rooted in Oriya culture as seen in the Weaves, the Crafts and the Tribal and Rural life forms" (GOO 1992).

30 Rajiv Sethi works as a Designer and Arts Advisor in Delhi. He is a member of the voluntary organisation SARTHI set up by artists and their supporters. The purpose of the organisation is an attempt to combat problems such as unemployment, underemployment, exploitation and the debilitating feeling amongst many traditional artists that they are of no use to society any longer (personal communication with Sethi and information from the leaflet "SARTHI. Friends of artists in need"). For a discussion of some of the consequences of the organisations's projects for village artisans see Tarlo & Bundgaard (1994).

government officials was Dr. B. K. Ratha (leader of the Crafts Council) and Mr. Basu, Director of Handicraft and Cottage Industries. Moreover the majority of people in Bhubaneshwar who make up this cluster of the art world were present.

When the guests finally came they were shown around in the small, crowded exhibition rooms. It was not only because of her age that Jayakar looked at only a few of the items displayed. The main reason was that she was genuinely disappointed with what she saw. Having seen just a few of the crafts exhibited, Jayakar said she would like to see some "really fine handicrafts". The Director of Handicraft and Cottage Industries brought further examples (from the Handicraft Complex) but they were all rejected. Jayakar wanted to know why no "really fine" craftsmen had come to present their work.

She went on to say that she could afford to be critical because she has seen truly fine pieces of Indian crafts during her time as advisor on crafts. She then asked where in Orissa one should go if wanting truly fine handicrafts. Basu, who felt embarrassed because of the criticism, informed her that she had seen only the work of Master Craftsmen holding national or state awards and suggested that the seminar should begin. The majority of painters present were in fact Master Craftsmen although many of the paintings were the work of other painters exhibited in the names of the Master Craftsmen.

The purpose of the seminar, conducted in Hindi, was to give the craftsmen a chance to articulate the problems they faced in the production and marketing of their crafts. The craftsmen, a journalist and the visiting anthropologist were placed on rows of chairs facing Ratha, Basu, Jayakar and Sethi (see figure 89). Basu then asked the craftsmen to raise any difficulties they had encountered in their work. There was no response and Basu changed tactic directing his question directly to one of the painters,

Figure 89: Seminar in the Handicraft Complex, Bhubaneshwar 1992.

Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.). With some hesitation Jagannātha said that the painters faced difficulties during the summer when the number of tourists decreased. Encouraged by this, Ananta Mahāranā (E.1.2.) added that the painters from Dānda Sāhi also suffered during the rainy season. Apart from this, however, nobody said anything.

Slightly disappointed with the lack of response, Basu reminded the craftsmen that the seminar was intended to give them a chance to speak and then introduced Sethi. Sethi encouraged the muted group to organise themselves and to forget about depending upon government officials, something which clearly made the craftsmen feel uneasy, perhaps due to the presence of officials. The craftsmen still sat at their place when Jayakar and Sethi drove off. When the following day, I asked the painters why they had not, for example, mentioned the problematic square inch price system, they said that such complaints would not have changed anything. They thought Basu would have been offended if they had criticized the local government institutions in the presence of Pupul Jayakar[31]. As regards her criticism, some of the older painters thought she had a point but added that she could hardly have expected to find fine work when the painters had been given only one week's notice to prepare a painting for the exhibition.

A Seminar held under Different Circumstances

Sethi is a close friend of Jayakar and has been involved with craftsmen and their work for several years. He has returned to Raghurājpur several times since his first visit in the late 1970s[32]. The day after the exhibition in the

31 This conception had no base in reality. Basu would, in fact, have been pleased to receive criticisms. Not all government officials, however, have Basu's attitude.

32 That was when he singled out two young students of Jagannātha Mahāpātra and decided to promote them by sending them abroad for two months. In 1982 Sarat Kumar Sahu was sent to England to participate in the Festival of India in Britain, whereas Bhaskar Mahāpātra was sent to the States in 1985 to participate in the US Festival of India. For a discussion of the process by which this Festival came to be organised and the impact of Festivals of India see Durrans (1992). Kurin has described how the Aditi-Mela involved Indian folk artists for whom

Handicraft Complex Sethi came again to the village, where the villagers had arranged some events in his honour. According to Sethi, he and Jayakar had been disappointed by the seminar and he had decided to give the craftsmen an apology for having wasted their time. As far as he was concerned, there was a common problem with officials' preoccupation with their own image and performance, rather than the actual problems of craft production. He was convinced that the reason the craftsmen had not responded when asked to state their complaints and needs, was their dependence upon the officials present.

The silence of the craftsmen might, of course, simply have been a consequence of a feeling of insecurity or inferiority arising from the unfamiliar situation. Whatever the reason, the craftsmen had no difficulties communicating their needs when Sethi proposed to have an informal meeting in the co-operative of Raghurājpur after the performances had come to an end and the last officials had left. The majority of craftsmen from Raghurājpur and a few from Dānda Sāhi came to participate in the meeting. It was not only Kunja Mahāranā, Jagannātha Mahāpātra and the secretary of the cooperative who spoke but also several of the younger craftsmen. The conversation that ensued produced requests for: an STD phone, a fax and a guesthouse[33].

Pupul Jayakar and her Philosophy

Unfortunately a tight time schedule during her visit in Orissa did not allow Jayakar to explain, in depth, her perception of the *patta* paintings and

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it was not merely exhibitions. Some of the artists, who earlier had been regarded with contempt by Indian officials, benefited from their celebrity status upon returning to India (Kurin 1991:320-23).

33 When I met Sethi in November 1992 in Delhi he had just completed a letter for the Chief Minister of Orissa in which he argued for the necessity of acceding to the craftsmen's requests.

Indian crafts in general. However, Jayakar has published sufficient material to provide an understanding of her perspective.

Jayakar has been closely associated with the development of handlooms and the crafts of India since 1947. It was not least due to her close relation with Indira Gandhi that Jayakar acquired her acknowledged position as leading advisor on arts and crafts and consequently a central role within networks of state patronage.

Jayakar has been described as India's best-known cultural personality[34]. She has had a profound influence on the Delhi intelligentsia including intellectuals such as Raj Thapar, as evident in her memoir "All these years". There Thapar describes the way Jayakar was able to recognise superior quality in craft designs: "In a vague, dreamy-eyed, almost mystic way, [she] recognised excellence in India's myriad aesthetic-forms" (1991:57).

In "The Earth Mother"[35] Jayakar writes about different visual arts and crafts made by people in rural areas. Jayakar provides detailed descriptions of the crafts she discusses and places the objects within a broader contextual framework allowing her to invest the objects with meaning.

Among the crafts described are the paintings now well known as "*Madhubani*". These paintings have a story which in certain aspects is identical to that of the Orissan *patta* paintings. In Mithila, in the district of Darbhanga, Bihar, women used to make "*Bhitti Chitras*" or wall paintings but the painting tradition had almost died out by the 1950's. Stella

34 In the Penguin edition of "The Earth Mother" (1989).

35 A revised and updated edition of "The Earthen Drum" (1980).

Kramrisch describes how Jayakar played an important role for the re-awakening[36] of the painting tradition:

> "Jayakar in person was instrumental in bringing about the prodigious efflorescence of a village tradition that nearly had died out by 1950. When as a relief measure after the drought of 1968, Jayakar provided the women with means to paint and communicated to them her enthusiasm, they began to remember and continue a tradition that had survived in but a few paintings or their mere traces....By now [1989], a second, young generation of women painters enriches the Madhubani tradition" (Kramrisch 1989:20).

I shall now briefly consider the way Jayakar describes and talks about the Madhubani paintings in order to get an idea about her broader perspective on Indian arts and crafts. She notes how the understanding of the rural arts has been obscured by the general belief that these arts are the product of illiterate people without access to India's storehouses of myth, legend and symbol.

Jayakar stresses that this is far from correct and mentions that sanctuaries of religion, art and literature had sprung into existence in villages from the earliest times when religious teachers, poets, painters, musicians and epic performers sought refuge in the countryside. According to Jayakar it was these sanctuaries which made possible the survival of archaic myth and history.

Jayakar describes in detail various examples of paintings done by the women of Mithila. To the description is added Jayakar's interpretation of meaning. One example of Jayakar's perspective can be seen in her comments on a painting depicting *Kāliya Mardana*[37] made by a *Brahmin* youth:

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36 Kramrisch' use of the metaphor re-awakening is interesting, suggesting that, as it were, the painters were asleep before Jayakar's arrival at the scene.

37 In Oriya known as *Kāliyadalana* (cf. chapter 3, figures 17 and 34).

> "The painting is charged with erotic symbolism. The five-hooded, uprising cobra between the outflung legs of the Ahir youth and the eyes on the cloth are a visualization of phallic desire. The coiling, serpent bodies of the maidens express awakening passion, while the heads of the cobras penetrating the navel of the maidens is symbolic of mithuna or union" (Jayakar 1989:105).

According to Jayakar the rural arts of Mithila are unique:

> "..for here coalesce a comprehension and knowledge of sanskrit learning and culture, its vocabulary and iconography, Tantric ritual and magic and the distortions and robust vitality inherent in the rural perceptions of the visual arts" (ibid.:106).

The examples chosen, out of many possible ones, illustrate Jayakar's concern with the extraction of meaning from the paintings she discusses. It is interesting to see how she continuously refers to the great tradition of Sanskrit texts as well as more local ones, all helping her to endow the Mithila paintings with meaning. In her attempt to find an authentic prior organicity Jayakar collapses the "big" and "little tradition" in what could perhaps be termed a folk-Sanskriticism.

The Handicraft and Handlooms Museum in Delhi

The majority of *patta* painters only rarely leave their villages or towns. There are quite a few, however, for whom a journey to Delhi, Bombay or Calcutta is a common event. Only very few get the opportunity to go abroad or to visit the Handicraft and Handlooms Museum established in the early 1970's in Delhi and better known as the Crafts Museum[38]. The museum does not only exhibit examples of India's craft traditions but also aims to increase the earnings of artisans by inviting them to demonstrate their skills and sell their products at the Craft Demonstration Area on the museum grounds.

38 Administratively the Crafts Museum is placed under the All India Handicrafts Commissioner within the Ministry of Textiles. For an excellent discussion of the Museum see Greenough (forthcoming).

When artisans come to the museum, the staff show them what they consider to be superior examples of past craft and encourage them to adhere to these "traditional designs" rather than attempt innovation. The intended audiences at the museum are not only tourists, scholars and the general public but also the craftsmen themselves, who, it is thought, will benefit through exposure to past examples of high quality crafts.

There are instances where advice is taken more literally than the museum intends. During one of my visits to the museum[39] I was looking through the *patta* paintings exhibited at one of the stalls in the Craft Demonstration Area when I came across a *patta* depicting a motif which has recently been adopted by *patta* painters. I was therefore surprised to find that the painting appeared to be very old. Seeing my confusion the maker of the painting asked a man standing nearby whether it would be all right to explain the apparent age to me. He agreed on the condition that we would speak only in Oriya. The visitor turned out to be a specialist faker who was skilled in the art of aging contemporary *pattas* through the use of chemicals.

The museum's task of selecting craftsmen for a month stay in Delhi is, according to the Deputy Director of the museum, not an easy one. Rather than the list of National awardees made by AIHB the museum depend upon their own people who tour around the country and report on "good craftsmen" as well as visiting scholars who have worked with craftsmen[40].

The now deceased Arjunā Mahāranā (E.2.1.) from Dānda Sāhi has been invited to the Crafts Museum on several occasions (cf. chapter 5, p. 301). The other *patta* painters who have worked on the museum grounds are Arjunā's son Abhi, Raju Das, Nrusingha Mahāranā (E.1.1.) and his son

39 The visit took place on a day during the period between 1988 and 1994.

40 I was also asked to contribute to the list of good craftsmen during one of my visits to the museum.

Niranjana Mahāranā and Bijay Kumar Parida (H.) from Bhubaneshwar[41]. Arjunā Mahāranā and Bijay Kumar Parida were described as the best *patta* painters by the Senior Director of the museum, Dr. Joytindra Jain, when I met him in August 1991 in Delhi. I had come to discuss my plan to do fieldwork in Raghurājpur and was advised to do fieldwork in Bhubaneshwar rather than the village because the craftsmen there, as far as he was concerned, were "lost".

Dr. Jain amplified this statement when I met him in Delhi in February 1994. He found that the problem with Raghurājpur is that it has been organised and regimented from outside by the Government, as well as private businessmen. Dr. Jain stressed that although the painters of Raghurājpur have always painted for the market, the difference now is that while they used to make an object with a specific (ritual) purpose for an identified client, they now produce for the impersonal market. This personalised ritual quality is therefore gone and with it the genuineness and the inner individual expression of the objects produced.

Dr. Jain described the crafts of Orissa as being extremely conservative compared to those of Calcutta, for example, where artists and artisans have been exposed to influences from outside. He stressed that he is not a traditionalist but found that the finest of tradition has a merit. In Orissa they have inherited a style, noticeable for example in the delicate rendering of trees, and it is therefore a pity, Dr. Jain said, when craftsmen hybridise their craft by, for example, unconsciously incorporating elements from popular calendar prints. However, according to Dr. Jain, the use of elements from other fields in *patta* painting is acceptable as long as the introduction results in a **conscious** collage.

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41 Bijay is not of *Chitrakāra jāti*. At the Museum skill, rather than *jāti* identity has a priority when choosing craftsmen suitable for one month stay in Delhi.

Looking through the *patta* paintings I had brought, Dr. Jain considered the painting depicting *Jashodā* milking a cow (cf. chapter 5, figure 65) an honest, though naive, painting. He was not as impressed with the painting depicting *Ganesh* (cf. chapter 5, figure 62). This reminded Dr. Jain of the contemporary craze in Delhi for using ethnic looking canopies at wedding processions. Dr. Jain considered the painting of *Nabagunjara* (cf. chapter 3, figure 68) as representative of the process of miniaturisation, i.e. minute dot work, and a large amount of ornamentation, which Orissan painting is currently undergoing.

According to Dr. Jain excessive ornamentation is incompatible with good art, and he stressed that earlier Orissan painters did not employ so much decoration. Dr. Jain blamed the judgements of the contemporary award givers, 80% of whom will comment on the amount of work, as if that is a quality in itself and described with irony how judges and political figures seriously look at paintings through magnifying glass, as if the sheer fineness was an indication of quality.

Though Dr. Jain, like other members of museum staff, encourages craftsmen to make use of past examples of craft excellence, he is open to, and interested in cultural pastiche. Nevertheless the chances are that a *patta* painter who decides to make "conscious collages" rather than "traditional" *pattas* would no longer be invited to the Crafts Museum. In a post-modern area cultural pastiche is still not welcome at a museum the main purpose of which is to preserve the Indian craft "tradition". This caused uneasiness for Dr. Jain, who was caught between his own personal interest and traditionalistic expectations to an Indian Crafts Museum.

We saw earlier that the contact between the local elite and the craftsmen was relatively limited. Nevertheless the influence of the local elite on the painting production is, in general, stronger than that of the national elite, though this is dependent on the frequency of contact. Pupul Jayakar's visit,

for example, is not likely to have any effect on contemporary production. This is, among other things, due to the nature of her visit which was extremely brief and unlikely to be repeated for several years. Although the painters listened to her criticism, they did not take it in. This was partly because the critique was concerned with the objects in isolation, without any attempt at relating the quality of the paintings to the circumstances under which they were made. All the painters were aware that paintings of a higher quality could have been made, the point being that this will happen only if somebody is prepared to pay what is required to make such paintings.

The case of Dr. Joytindra Jain and the Craft Museum in general, is different, for some painters return from the museum filled with visions of how to improve the quality of their craft. This may have to do with the concrete nature of advice, i.e. painters are exposed to examples of past craft and encouraged to consolidate their work in very specific ways. It might also be related to the fact that painters are told that high quality work is likely to result in an increased sale and payment. Another possibly influential factor is, of course, that painters hope to be invited to the museum again and therefore will try to adjust to the ideas of the staff.

What has emerged in the first section of the chapter is the diversity of attitudes and perceptions, particularly within the local elite, but also among the national elite. Moreover, it should have become clear that the clusters, or worlds, within the art world should not be seen as fixed entities - the views and actions of members of different worlds do sometimes overlap.

A government institution such as the Directorate of Industries is concerned with social, that is the generation of employment, and the economic aspects of craft production and it therefore encourages craftsmen to cater their production to contemporary demands. This attitude is also apparent in the

Handicraft Complex and the Training Centre, both of which are under the Directorate of Industries.

In contrast to the economically and socially grounded concern of the Directorate of Industries, the major concern of Lalit Kala Akademi is the aesthetic aspect of the paintings. In this respect the Akademi mirrors the attitude of the members of the Crafts Council. The two institutions do, however, differ in their conceptions of what are acceptable innovations in the field of *patta* painting. Whereas the Ajanta rock paintings and Rajasthani miniature paintings are acceptable sources of inspiration to the Akademi, the Crafts Council objects to sources of inspiration from outside Orissa on the grounds that such inclusions may spoil the purity of the *patta* painting tradition.

The Director of the National Crafts Museum might not be a traditionalist but some of the practices which take place at the museum are traditionalist in their approach. The idea of confronting craftsmen with past examples of superior craftsmanship is very much in line with the policy of the local Orissan Crafts Council, which advises painters to seek inspiration from old Orissan palm leaf etchings and wall paintings. The difference between the approach of the two institutions is that the Crafts Museum only uses old examples of the visual field within which the craftsman practices, whereas the Crafts Council includes diverse contemporary and past visual fields as acceptable sources of inspiration as long as they can be said to be purely Orissan.

Like Dr. Ratha from the Crafts Council Jayakar emphasises the importance of the relationship between ancient Sanskrit texts and crafts. But whereas Dr. Ratha is concerned with an apparent lack of textual knowledge among the contemporary craftsmen, Jayakar, in her discussion of the Madhubani paintings, assumes that the painters, through religion, art and literature, have a comprehension and knowledge of Sanskrit learning. This allows her to

endow the paintings she discusses with meaning and takes her a long way from the painters' local discourse which I outlined in the previous chapter. Her approach does, however, tie in with the ideas of at least one of the local Orissan Government institutions, which, as we shall soon see, has distributed questionnaires concerned with painters' textual knowledge.

Section II

The Changing Significance of Awards

As vertical interventions, awards filter through the different layers of the art world. The significance of an award changes as it passes from the upper layers or clusters of the art world to the local level. At the upper clusters an award signifies superior craftsmanship and is concerned only with "pure" aesthetics. At the local level a whole set of other meanings is attached to an award, which, among other things, have to do with social relations.

This section of the chapter is concerned with the process of award giving. The following factors are discussed: painters' reception to the announcement of a competition as well as the influence of an award on social relations and painters' reception of the work of others.

An Invitation to Participate in a Competition for National Awards

Painters have access to regional and national recognition through two types of awards: state and national awards. A competition for state or national awards for selected crafts is held every alternate year. A letter dated June 2, 1992 was sent to the secretary of the cooperative in Raghurājpur. It

concerned the submission of entries for consideration of state level selection for national awards for the year 1992[42].

Craftsmen or women interested in competing for the award were required to tender their submission along with photographs, filled-in proforma, bio-data and affidavit - (in English!) to the respective District Industries Centre by 30th June[43]. The painters thus had less than four weeks to prepare their entry. It seems difficult to justify a letter in English sent to painters who only understand Oriya and Hindi.

The questions in the form (discussed below) indicate that it has never been the intention of the "Office of the Development Commissioner of Handicrafts" that the form should be filled in by the craftsmen themselves. Moreover, this was clearly indicated by the title of the form: "Form to be used by crafts person recommending agency for sending details of entries to the national awards for Master Craftsmen selection committee".

Rather than deliberate exclusion this thus appears to be an example of the incompetence of an official who sent the form to the cooperative knowing full well that neither the secretary nor the members spoke English. One of the results of incidents like this was that the craftsmen in general did not have any respect for officials whom they considered arrogant and behaving in an exclusionary manner.

Three painters from Raghurājpur and one from Dānda Sāhi decided to participate in the competition. Māguni Mahāpātra (I.2.2.1.) decided to submit a *Ganesh patta* he had commenced two months earlier, and asked

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42 It was sent by the Assistant Director of the Handicrafts Marketing and Service Extension Centre, Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Bhubaneshwar, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India.

43 As none of the *patta* painters speak English they had to arrange with and pay for an English speaking person to fill in the form.

the Block Development Officer to help him fill in the form (in English). He in common with the other painters participating was very annoyed with all the questions he had to answer:

> "Have a look at all these questions. Why is it necessary? I will never get time to paint".

The first questions (out of nineteen) on the form were straight-forward and it did not take Māguni long to decide what the B.D.O should write. But question number six (a-d) turned out to be more difficult. Māguni was required to state his degree of skill in the craft, to describe his mastery over the traditional techniques involved in the craft, his ability to evolve new designs and lastly to give a brief account of his contribution towards development/improvement of the craft and its techniques. His immediate response:

> "But surely they will know that when they see my paintings!".

Unlike most of the painters Māguni, in this case, did not seek to contextualise his art and simply appealed to its intrinsic worth. He found question number seven easier, in which information concerning his knowledge of *silpasāstras*, and similar literature on ancient arts and crafts was required. Māguni told the B.D.O. to write that he is familiar with *Krishnaleelā, Rāmāyana, Mahābhārata* and *Siva purāna.*

In question number eight he was asked to give details of outstanding work/items executed by him and note if any of them had been purchased by museums, temples, art critics, or connoisseurs of repute. If possible, he should enclose documents to substantiate the claim.

Māguni found that question number nine, whether the painter has taught in any training institute, was annoying:

"Why do they not ask whether I have taught students in my home?".

Māguni had received a prize from a shop called "Orissa Handicraft" in 1989, so question number ten (whether the craftsman had received any awards or prizes) was easy to answer. So was question number eleven, in which he was requested to give details of major exhibitions in which he has participated either to demonstrate his skill or to display his work.

Question number thirteen was concerned with whether the craftsman had featured in any publications. As far as Māguni knew, nobody had written about him in particular, but the question gave him an idea:

> "Perhaps you could write an article about my *Ganesh* painting, I can then refer to that in next year's form".

The last question which caused Māguni difficulties was number sixteen which requested certificates from well known institutions or persons knowledgeable in handicrafts recommending his ability in the craft and his contribution to the development of the craft. Māguni had a certificate from the Training Centre in Bhubaneshwar. However, Māguni thought the certificate would be out of date and he was quite sure that his former *guru* would not write him a recommendation because they did not get on. He was, moreover, convinced that none of the officials in Bhubaneshwar would take the time required to write such a letter within the deadline.

The questions sought information on what the award-givers wished to know. It is striking that a majority of the questions were concerned with a possible earlier history of official recognition of the craftsmen. In common with art practice the world over a painter who has already been admitted into an art world is more likely to be acknowledged than a newcomer.

Some questions in the form were simply considered inappropriate at a local level. Nārāyana Mahāranā thought the form and what it stood for ridiculous and commented on question number seven "Knowledge of *silpasāstras*... and similar literature on ancient arts and crafts":

> "Since when has it become necessary for a mask maker to know about *sāstras*? These people have nothing better to do than ask meaningless questions. They just sit in their offices with all their *forms* but what do they know? Nothing at all".

Nārāyana's comment indicates that it is appropriate to ask whether this question has any relevance for a *patta* painter. Before the 1960s and the new, demanding designs made by the Handicraft Complex, a *patta* painter was able to manage his work if he was familiar with the appropriate appearance of the deities he was to paint during a yearly cycle[44].

In general *pattas*, other than *thiā badhiās*, consisted of single motifs which did not require an in-depth knowledge of *purānas* or the epics. It is moreover important to remember that the self inflicted isolation in which some painters work nowadays is a recent phenomenon. When painting for *Brahmins*, for example, a *Chitrakāra* would never be expected to recite *sāstras* but simply to paint. We saw in chapter 4 how Nrusingha Mahāranā (E.1.1.) painted on the doors of *Brahmins* (*duāre lekhā*) while the eldest male member of the *Brahmin* household noted down the appropriate *sāstras* to be used in the ritual.

With the new designs of the 1960s, where frequently a central motif is surrounded by chronologically ordered motifs, the painters had to expand their mythological knowledge. In the 1970s they would still employ a

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44 A painter depicting a deity for worship does not necessarily know the *sloka* describing a deity but will be familiar with the *dhyāna* or visualisation of particular aspects of the divinity which is described in a *sloka* and represented iconographically.

Brahmin to read aloud the *Rāmāyana*, for example, if they had got an order for a *Rāmāyana patta* with many illustrations[45]. Nowadays more and more painters of the younger generation can be seen reading and making notes on, for example, *purānas*.

An example is the deity *Ganesh*, who is very popular amongst tourists from Bombay and the West. When made as a "story painting", a *Ganesh patta* requires knowledge of the *Siva purāna*. The painters are familiar with the story of how *Pārvatī* formed *Ganesh* after *Siva* had sent her way. But they cannot recall when exactly *Siva* sent *Nandi* and *Bhrungi* to fight *Ganesh* for example.

The intervention of the Government has therefore resulted in the painters needing to acquire textual knowledge. Yet, the extent of knowledge of *sāstras* is considered irrelevant by most painters for whom it is the skill of their handiwork which is important, rather than texts.

The role which texts have come to play in their work was demonstrated when Lingarāj Mahāranā (C.1.1.) ordered Māguni (I.2.2.1.) to make a *Ganesh patta* and the latter asked him to bring his notes copied from a dance drama about *Ganesh*[46]. Without the notes Māguni was not able to make the illustrations.

Māguni, who otherwise always worked in front of his house facing the lane of Raghurājpur, chose to make the *Ganesh patta* in his house[47]. He did not want other painters to see the work because they might copy a new

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45 Occasionally these contained more than a hundred illustrations.

46 The painters usually illustrate how *Ganesh* got his elephant head. A central motif of *Ganesh* is surrounded by illustrations of *Siva* throwing out *Pārvatī*, *Pārvatī* creating *Ganesh*, *Ganesh* guarding the place where *Pārvatī* stayed, *Siva* being defeated by *Ganesh* and so forth (cf. chapter 3, figure 42).

47 The painters prefer, in general, to work in front of their houses because of the light and the company. It gives them a chance to chat with the people who stroll by.

decorative design he had created. When making what they consider *special* work, the *patta* painters were always worried that other painters would copy their work[48].

Rabindra Mahāpātra (a former student of Jagannātha Mahāpātra [B.1.]) worked in the cooperative on a *patta* depicting *Rāma's* consecration (*Rāma abhiseka*). He tried hard not to paint the illustrations the way they are usually painted[49]. In his opinion the award committee was tired of seeing the same designs again and again and he thought that in order to get an award, he would have to create something new. Rabindra had asked his relative, Dīnabandhu Mahāpātra, to assist him in making the *patta* for entry into the competition[50]. He was short of time because he had several *commercial*[51] orders to complete within the month of June. Even if a painter is entering a work for competition, he will still often get help from other painters. Students, a wife or a son will often be asked to apply colour (*banakā*) and make the borders (*dhadi*) for example. Sometimes large parts of a *patta* are made by another painter.

In Bhubaneshwar Parikshita Mahāranā (J.1.) worked on a *patta* depicting *Chandan Jātrā*, where *Nrusingha* goes boating in the intense heat of summer smeared in sandal paste (*chandan*)[52]. The background was painted with *hingula*, a stone colour he did not normally use because it was

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48 The problem of originality versus copy is briefly discussed in chapter 5, p. 356-57.

49 In Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi illustrations of *Sītā chari*, for example, are almost always exactly alike. This is a consequence of convention as well as the copying of photographs of paintings. Although there is a lot of variety in contemporary oleographs, there is a dominant form.

50 Dīnabandhu is a former student of Jagannātha Mahāpātra and should not be confused with the teacher at the Training Centre (I.2.3.1.).

51 The painters use the English word *commercial* when referring to work purely done in order to make money. It is also called "work for business" (*byabasāya kāma*).

52 Sandal paste is said to have a cooling quality.

expensive and time consuming to prepare. The use of a traditional colour would, according to Parikshita, enhance his chances of getting an award.

This example indicates how the execution of *pattas* made for awards can differ markedly from the usual painting process. The painters are aware of this and often complain about the officials who arrange the competitions and select the recipients of awards. According to the painters these people know nothing of painting, make strange demands and behave as if they were Very Important Persons (V.I.P.s.).

Nārāyana Mahāranā (C.1.-s-i-l.) also considered participating, but was not sure he would be able to come up with something new, due to the short notice[53]. According to Nārāyana the common motifs, i.e. Ganesh story, *Krishna-* and *Rāma-leelā* would not stand a chance:

> "They do not want to see the same old paintings. Now new *subjects* are needed".

In search for potential motifs Nārāyana had visited semi-monastic institutions (*mathas*) and societies (*jāgāgharas*) of Puri. Another painter, however, was not sure that a new subject would be sufficient and said to a relative:

> "Do you follow, from now on you just scratch out a painting and submit it (*gārei kiri dei de*). Give them 5000 [rupees] and keep 5000 in your own pocket"[54].

Nārāyana had a mixed attitude to awards and had never himself received one. He claimed one of his *pattas* once passed the selection committee at

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53 Nārāyana was of the opinion that the assistant Director of "Handicrafts Marketing and Service Extension Centre" had acted correctly giving so short a notice. According to Nārāyana a long time span would give the painters time to try to bribe the selection committee.

54 A national award is often accompanied by a cash sum of Rs. 10,000. The painter here suggested that his relative should bribe the members of the committee in order to get the award. Bribery occasionally took place within some of the Government institutions either in the form of gifts or cash given to officials.

the state level and went on to the selection board at the national level. It was, however, rejected because a painter wrote a complaint saying it was not the work of Nārāyana - an indication of the stiff competition among the painters. Nārāyana often complained about corruption and cheating, which according to him (and most other painters) were endemic features of award giving[55]. On one occasion he claimed that one would get more honour from painting the chariots for the Car Festival (the *Ratha Jātrā* held on *Āsādha sukla* 2) than from a national award, which would always be the result of a haphazard selection process. However, when it turned out that no *patta* had been awarded in 1992, Nārāyana said that he had lost any respect he had for the painters from Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi[56]. Awards did, in other words, influence the way he conceived of other painters. It is striking, but not surprising, that Nārāyana on the one hand claimed the judges were corrupt and on the other took their decisions as a valid assessment of other *patta* painters. His comments on judges and their evaluations revealed a great deal about himself and his position, but they also indicate the importance awards have acquired in the lives of painters and the intense competition which ensues.

Nārāyana Mahāranā was just one of several painters who were troubled by the practice of submitting paintings for competitions which were often not the work of the entrant. Binod Mahāranā (G.), for example, stated that it should not be possible for a painter to get an award unless he had participated in competitions for six or seven years. Only then would it be possible for the committee to recognise the work of a painter.

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55 It has so happened that a painter was awarded for a painting he had bought from another painter. At exhibitions it is very common for a *patta* displayed in the name of one painter to be the work of another (see the section on the exhibition in the "Handicraft complex"). This is not necessarily understood to be divious by the painters.

56 As mentioned some of the painters in Raghurājpur and one in Dānda Sāhi had submitted an entry for the competition.

The discourses on bribery and unfairness reflect, among other things, the painters' feelings of deliberate exclusion. Symptomatic of the exclusion were the questions in the form discussed above, which many painters found irrelevant, time consuming and also expensive, because of the need for a translator.

The Significance of an Award in the Life of a Painter

An award, and in particular a national award, gives a painter prestige and often has consequences for his social position amongst other painters and sometimes within the wider village.

The national award Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.) received the 25th of January 1965 for a *patta* painting has played a profound role in his life as well as the social life of his village. Since then Jagannātha has celebrated the day by inviting people to come to his home. When the guests have arrived, Jagannātha gives a talk, seated next to a garlanded photo of Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishna[57].

In 1989 as well as 1992 the talks were inaugurated with Jagannātha's account of the history of craft production in the village, followed by the issue of competition for customers. The talks ended by reminding the villagers and officials[58] that Raghurājpur would be nothing if it had not been for Jagannātha and his national award.

In his speech Jagannātha praised the time of monarchy, when the *Māhārājā* of Orissa provided the *Chitrakāras* with food and shelter:

57 The ex-president of India who presented the award to Jagannātha.

58 Among others Jagannātha had invited the local Block Development Officer (1989).

"He gave them food, shelter and all other things which are essential for a man to survive. The painters were free from anxiety and did not have to run hither and thither to sell their paintings".

Figure 90: Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishna and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay present Jagannātha Mahāpātra with the national award, 1965[59].

59 I do not know who took the original photograph. This is a photograph of the photograph Jagannātha received with the award in 1965.

However, according to Jagannātha nobody saw to the needs of the painters after the monarchy was abolished and this resulted in despair:

> "That is why we are compelled to sell our paintings at any cost. Our business became even worse when the printing machine was invented[60]. The printed paintings were much cheaper than the paintings we made".

The painters gave up painting and earned an income working in betel fields, as coolies in Calcutta or making bricks for construction work. When Halina Zealey came to visit Raghurājpur she only found a few people painting and they only made *jātri pattis*. Jagannātha then said he had been shocked when the painters in Dānda Sāhi insulted the Raghurājpur painters:

> "I could not tolerate the humiliation of Raghurājpur and decided to answer back the Dānda Sāhi people[61]. I tried to help the villagers (in Raghurājpur) as much as possible and later I became famous at national level".

Comparing his deed with that of *Durgā*, Jagannātha described how the goddess was once created by the gods and was able to kill the demon using their strength and weapons:

> "Likewise it would not have been possible for me to make the village famous if it had not been for the support and encouragement of the villagers".

The talk given in 1989 was mainly concerned with Bānāmbara Nāyaka (Raghurājpur) and his selling of crafts. As mentioned in chapter 1, Bānāmbara's house was situated right at the entrance of Raghurājpur for which reason some craftsmen felt he snatched their potential customers. In

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60 Machine printed images proliferated in India from the late 1870s onwards and monarchy came to an end in 1947. Jagannātha's chronology is idiosyncratic: in fact painters' business had suffered at the end of the 19th century, fifty years before the abolition of monarchy.

61 Jagannātha here refers to the incident discussed in chapter 1 where painters from Dānda Sāhi, after Zealey had "discovered" Raghurājpur, in order to humiliate the painters there, asked who would take care of the betel fields if they were to begin painting. The contemporary competition between Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi is thus not a recent phenomenon.

his talk Jagannātha requested the villagers to ensure that Bānāmbara or any other dealers who did not produce crafts were not allowed to sell in the village. If that could not be achieved, Jagannātha would move his household to Konarak[62].

In 1992 one of the points in Jagannātha's speech was that the number of businessmen in the village who sold crafts without actually producing them had increased. During the period between my first (1988-89) and second (1991-92) stay there had been an increasing tension between two fractions in the village: supporters and opponents of Jagannātha Mahāpātra (see chapter 7). Jagannātha made it clear that the people who were on his side were the ones who understood that without his effort Raghurājpur would not have become what it is today.

However, the main part of the speech concerned Jagannātha's status and skill as a craftsman. Among other things Jagannātha talked about the event in January 1989 when Lalita Kala Akademi gave him the title of "Dharmapada"[63] and furthermore awarded him Rs. 25000.

> "Some people said that I ought to get the award because the title suits me. The person in charge [at the ceremony] however, asked me why I had come to get an award of only Rs. 25000[64] when I have already got a national award. He wondered whether it will affect my status as a national awardee[65]".

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62 The sun temple Konarak is one of the biggest tourist attractions in Orissa. It will be remembered from chapter 1 that most of the paintings sold in Jagannātha Mahāpātra's household are not produced there.

63 This title refers to the boy Dharmapada who made the roof of the Konarak temple. He thereby saved the 12000 workmen who, according to the legend, would have been killed had he not acted swiftly. According to Mr. J.C. Kanungo (secretary, Lalit Kala Akademi) "Dharmapada" is the finest award one can get at state level. Jagannātha was selected for his contribution to traditional Orissan paintings.

64 For several of the households of Raghurājpur Rs. 25,000 equals six years income.

65 Jagannātha does not himself seem to worry. After the award ceremony, he ordered new visiting cards: "Sri Jagannātha Mahāpātra (Master Craftsman). National awarded - 1965, Reward of Dharmpada - 1989".

In 1989 the craftsmen generally agreed that it would be very unfortunate for the village if Jagannātha were to leave. The tourists visiting the village were thought to come to see the Master Craftsman and his work rather than the village as such. The craftsmen therefore decided to give Bānāmbara Nāyaka an ultimatum and forbade him to sell[66].

In 1992 things had changed and people were less concerned with Jagannātha's plans. After the meeting, Rabindra Mahāpātra (a former student of Jagannātha) said that he was confident that tourists would continue to come to Raghurājpur even after Jagannātha's death. No steps were taken to prevent the sale of crafts by people who did not produce handicrafts, among other things, because most people depend on the middlemen to sell their own work.

For three decades, Jagannātha has been one of the most, if not the most, influential person in Raghurājpur. If villagers needed advice, for example, on the arrangement of a feast, or settling of a dispute, they would ask Jagannātha for advice. Tourists came to see the paintings made by the famous Master Craftsman, "Delhi Doordarshan" came to film him at work in his house[67] and researchers paid visits to discuss issues such as painting, the economics of craft production, and knowledge of *sāstras*. Jagannātha was, in other words, the link to the world outside Raghurājpur. The national award played a crucial role in helping him to acquire such renown.

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66 The restriction, however, did not last long. Among other things because Bānāmbara is one of the few who offers painters advances or immediate cash for their crafts, during and outside the tourist season.

67 At the 8th of May 1992 Delhi Doordarshan (the national television network) came to the household of Jagannātha Mahāpātra where they filmed Jagannātha and one of the scheduled caste woman he has taught. They came to Orissa to film different crafts from what in Orissa is known as the Golden Triangle, namely Puri, Konarak and Bhubaneshwar. They spent almost all their time in Jagannātha's household and only took a few short clips of the village in general on their way to the house of the Master Craftsman.

As already indicated, his position had changed when I came the second time. The majority of his older students had left him to work on their own and Jagannātha therefore depended on painters outside his household to keep a store of paintings for sale. Some of these painters were young and relatively inexperienced. During my second stay there was an increasing number of incidents in which tourists rejected the *patta* in Jagannātha's household only to buy from his students living further down the lane. According to Jagannātha, his difficulties were caused by the position of his stars which were under the influence of Saturn[68]. An alternative explanation could be that Jagannātha was getting old and was loosing some of his skills.

Often painters would argue that awards were meaningless, although, not surprisingly, they were mainly people who had not gained an award. The reason they participated in competitions, was, they claimed, to enhance the possibilities of getting a job in the Handicraft Complex or Training Centre in Bhubaneshwar. However, when other painters fail to get an award it is used against them as proof of the poor quality of their work. While thus treated sceptically, awards play an important role in painters' judgements of each other.

It remains to be considered whether the contemporary award system fulfils the intended goal of ensuring the continuation of the so called "traditional" crafts of India. The Orissan material suggests that the competitions create a relatively independent production which has very little in common with everyday production. However, new designs, patterns or motifs developed for a competition - regardless of whether they receive awards - are in the course of time incorporated into everyday production. The competitions do therefore have an effect on general production, but this is an effect not

68 The *sarhe sati* of Saturn is a seven-and-a-half year period when the planet is in an inauspicious location in a person's horoscope (see Pugh 1986:65).

always welcomed by the art specialists. As already suggested, some see new introductions as a threat to the continuation of the *patta* tradition.

Awards affect more than the formal execution of a type of craft. At the village level a competition for an award leads to tension among painters who seclude themselves in their individual homes for fear of being copied. When a painter is rewarded, it affects his status amongst other painters as well as co-villagers. This is, among other things, a consequence of tourists' preference to see and buy paintings made by an award winning artist.

Awards are of course not only considered important amongst the painters but also play a significant role in the choices made by customers, and determine the status and possibilities open to a painter. For example, only a recipient of an award will be considered for a post as a teacher in the Training Centre and will be paid per piece rather than per square inch by Utkalikā[69].

Customers often prefer to buy from a painter with the title of Master Craftsman. This is not only apparent when tourists come to Raghurājpur, but also when representatives of Utkalikā come to order *pattas*. On one occasion, the latter went directly to the two Master Craftsmen Ananta (E.1.2.) and Arjunā Mahāranā (E.2.1.) in Dānda Sāhi and gave them all their orders. Outsiders' preference for the work of Master Craftsmen also became apparent during an interview with Binod Kumar, the General Manager at Toshali Sands, also known as "Orissa's ethnic village resort". According to Mr. Kumar he exclusively bought from Jagannātha Mahāpātra of Raghurājpur because he has got a national award. The hotel had made

69 In Utkalikā, Puri, the General Manager showed their collection of *pattas*. The price of the majority of the *pattas* was set according to a square inch rate. However, one *patta* was priced relatively higher even if it, from a quality point of view, was the same as the other. According to the General Manager this patta was made by the master craftsman Jagannātha Mahāpātra and for that reason the price was set at a piece rate rather than per square inch.

an arrangement with Jagannātha and had let his niece's husband paint and sell paintings at the hotel on the condition that the hotel got 20% in commission. It ought to be noted that the young man then could hardly paint - he only began to learn *patta* painting after his marriage in 1988 to Jagannātha's brother's daughter. When asked about the quality of the painting Kumar simply said:

> "He is the son-in-law of the awarded Master Craftsman Jagannātha Mahāpātra[70]. Have you ever been to the village of Raghurājpur? That is the place of origin of *patta* paintings".

This is a common example of how reputation comes to be valued more highly than actual skill. This case is extreme because the craftsman himself has not received an award but was chosen because he happened to be related to a famous Master Craftsman. In Raghurājpur the national award given to Jagannātha Mahāpātra in 1965 has had long term effects for the social relations in the village. It was also to result in one very specific action: the compilation by Jagannātha of a collection of textual fragments.

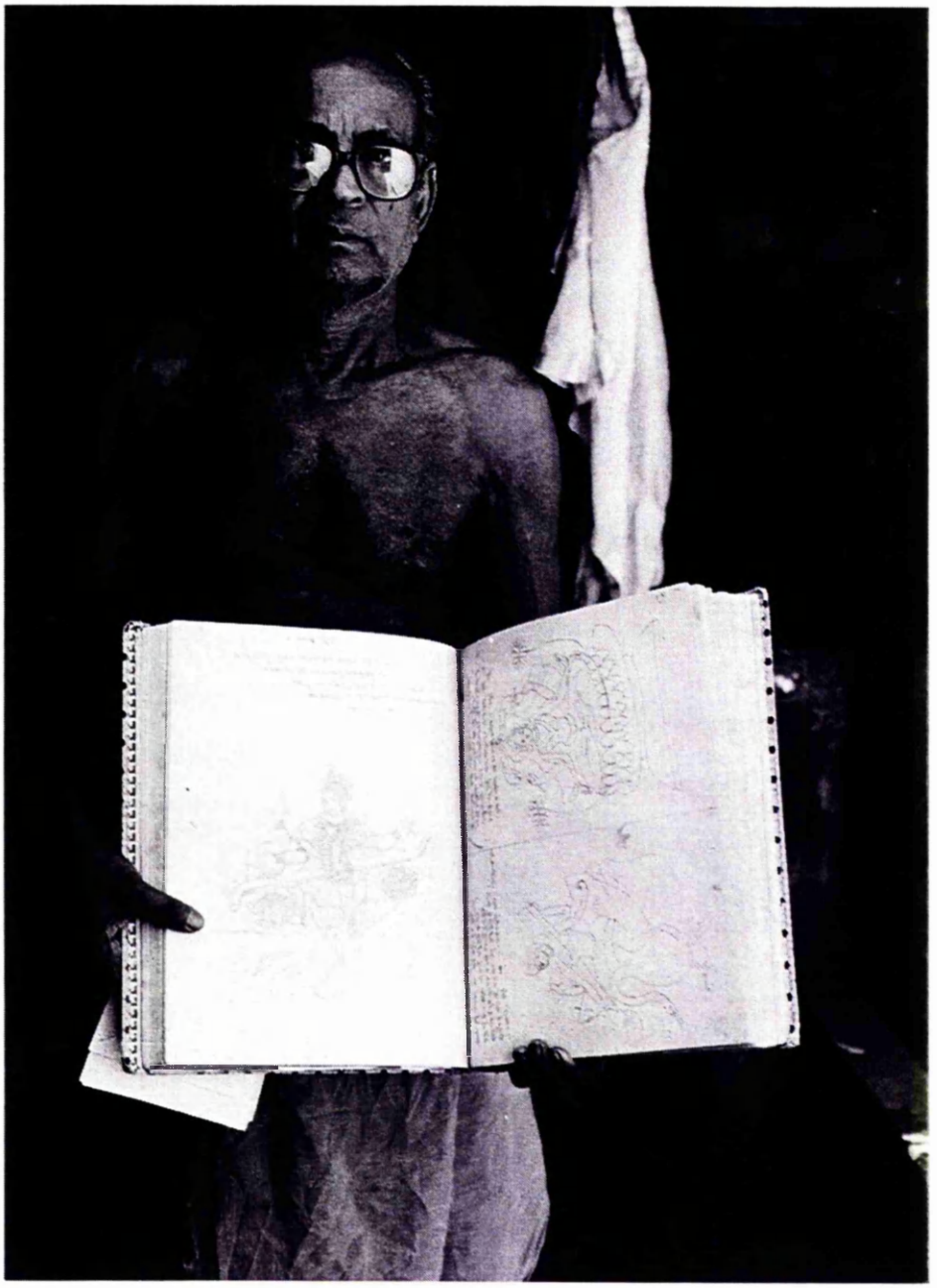
Knowledge of *sāstras* and *purānas*

The most visible evidence of the elite discourse's percolation to the local level was Jagannātha Mahāpātra's collection of *slokas* and sketches (see figure 91). The Master Craftsman had acquired various extracts of *purānas* and *slokas*. Jagannātha explained why he had made his collection:

> "In 1965 Sarbapalli Radhakrishna gave me a national award. I became famous but felt ashamed. People in general must have thought that I felt honoured, but actually I felt ashamed. Because I felt like this, I was obliged to collect various things from many places. I wonder whether anybody from our *jāti* has collected so much".

70 Jagannātha considers his niece and nephew for his daughter and son.

Figure 91: Jagannātha Mahāpātra shows his collection of *slokas* and sketches.



What Jagannātha was saying is that he felt obliged to compile a collection in order to live up to what he thought was the demand of the elite: a profound knowledge of Sanskrit texts. During one of our discussions he

talked about his life and work. He related how the forefathers of the *Chitrakāras* used to make figures of Jagannātha only and did not know much about *sāstras* and *purānas*. However, after Zealey's visit and his acquisition of a national award, Jagannātha decided to impart his knowledge to students and converted his house into a "*Gurukula āshrama*" (a place where apprentices stay with their teacher to learn a skill). In order to teach his students properly he felt he had to acquire textual knowledge - or at least the texts. We shall see a few examples of the collected texts and hear Jagannātha's interpretation. It is of significance that, being unlearned in Sanskrit, Jagannātha does not understand many of the texts he has collected.

Jagannātha's collection is arranged in a large book (*grantha*). It is a collection of *dhyānas* or *slokas* which describe the attributes of different deities. The main part of the *dhyānas* are accompanied by illustrations (sketches). The book also contains detailed notes on *Mahābhārata*, which are not accompanied by sketches[71]. The book is used as an aide-memoir but it also serves other purposes[72].

Painters often came to Jagannātha to get information concerning the *sāstras*, the *purānas* and even the epics. He told them whatever he could recall, but sometimes had to refer to his book:

> "Just like astrologers see almanacs to explain to people about things, I have my book with *sāstras*. There are a lot of things in this world. I have collected a few of them. A long time ago I used to have it all in my mind, but now I have forgotten a lot. But all the things are in the book in my house. When it is needed, the book is brought from the cupboard to teach the students.

71 For example it has no less than 75 paragraphs referring to the first chapter. The first note is "praying to *Ganesh*", the second is "praying to the goddess *Sāralā*", the third is "glories of the Soma dynasty", the fourth is "marriage of *Sāntann* (the father of *Bhisma*)" and so forth.

72 It is shown to customers so they can choose among different sketches to make an order. The book moreover serves to indicate that the paintings of Jagannātha's household are made in accordance with textual descriptions.

Take for example *Nabagunjara* - what is the colour of *Nabagunjara*? An Oriya poet has written that:

"[Some thing] is seen which has a head like a hen, peacock like neck, bull like back, lion waist, tail like a snake, feet like a tiger, horse and elephant, and a human hand holding a wheel".

(Mathe kukkuta mukuta mayura prayeka kantha
brusabhara pists eka disilare
singha kati sarpa lanja
Byaghra, aswa, hasti pada
manisha ra kare chakra disilāre).

This Oriya poem (*kāvya*) is an exception; the book mainly contains sanskrit *dhyānas*. According to Jagannātha people in general do not understand the Sanskrit in which the *slokas* are written. The painters therefore have to make sense of the *slokas* and express them through painting.

This is, however, easier said than done as the painters, as earlier mentioned, do not understand Sanskrit. According to Jagannātha the painters therefore prefer to use Oriya *kāvya* (poetry)[73]. Some of the *slokas* are so complicated that Jagannātha did not understand a single word, others were easier but still not fully comprehensible. Jagannātha recited a couple of *dhyānas* with difficulty, relying heavily on the sketch when interpreting the text[74]. Unfortunately the *dhyānas* will not be accompanied by Jagannātha's sketches. I was not allowed to copy both the *dhyānas* and the sketches

73 Most painters simply paint. Many do not understand the complexities of what they are painting. Some, however, as already mentioned, try to adjust to the requirement of the upper levels of the art world and read *purānas* or dramas.

74 I am grateful to the people who helped me translate the *slokas*. In Puri the Sanskrit lecturer Purna Chandra Mahāpātra at the Sadāshiba Kendriya Bidyālya college translated part of the *slokas*. Back at SOAS, London, Hemant Kanitkar not only translated the rest of the *slokas* as far as it was possible, but also encouraged me to continue the project. Sanskrit specialists will notice that the Sanskrit is not pure, but a mix of Sanskrit and Oriya (which makes translation difficult unless one is familiar with both languages). This was the form in which Jagannātha had noted down the *slokas*.

because Jagannātha feared that other craftsmen might get hold of the material - his life's work[75].

> "May the Goddess *Sarasvatī*, who wears garments as white as the Kunda flowers, the moon, fresh snow or a garland; who holds a bīnā as a beautiful staff; who is seated on a white lotus; and who is propitiated by the gods *Brahmā*, *Visnu* and *Siva*; dispel my ignorance and protect me".
>
> (***Sarasvati dhyāna***
> *Yā kundendu tusāra hāra dhavatā*
> *yā subhra vastrāvrtā*
>
> *yā vīnā varadanda mandita karā*
> *yā sveta padmāsanā*
>
> *yā Brahmācyuta sankara prabhrtibhir*
> *devaih sadā vanditā*
>
> *Sā mām pātu Sarasvatii bhagavati*
> *nihsesa jādyā pahā).*
>
> *abhaya, barada, binā*[76]

Searching for words he could recognize Jagannātha explained:

> "*Sarasvatī* is white coloured. She also wears a white dress. She sits on a white lotus. She keeps a *binā* and books in her hands. She has such an appearance".

Jagannātha then read a *dhyāna* describing *Durgā's* appearance:

> "[One] should pray [to the Goddess *Durgā*] who has a golden complexion; who has three eyes; who wears a beautiful smile; who is endowed with auspicious attributes; who wears a crescent moon in her crown; who has four arms and holds a conch and a discus; who is strong and beautiful; whose throat shines because of a necklace of pearls; and who is [praised] by the sages and the poets".

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75 This can perhaps be seen as Jagannātha's acknowledgement of my role in the art world. He knew that I was in contact with all the *patta* painters of Puri district some of them who were his competitors.

76 This was written as a note. The gesture *abhaya* bestows fearlessness or safety, *barada* is a giving gesture, *binā* is a musical instrument.

(***Durgā dhyāna***
Dhyāyet suvarna varnābhām
trīnetra chārubhāsini

Sarva laksana sampannām
madhyendu krta sekharām

Chaturbhujām, sanrha cakra dharam
balam svaruupinī

Mukta [dāman] lasad kanthā
Munibhita stuti pāthakaih

Siddhe devi gane drusthā kumāri Visnu sebitā
sarbe kāma pradang Durgā baradā bhakta batslā).

Jagannātha explained the text with ease:

> "*Durgā* has golden colour. *Trīnetra* means three eyes. *Chārubhāsinā* means a beautiful smile is always there. She has all the qualities a woman should have. The weapons of her hand are conch (*sankha*), wheel (*chakra*) and trident (*trisula*). She is stabbing a *trisula* through *Mahisā's* heart and a lion and a buffalo are also there".

It is particulary noteworthy that the last part of his explanation, was clearly not based on the text but, rather, on the sketch. It is, in other words, impossible to say which part of Jagannātha's explanations were actually founded on his reading of the texts and what was his common knowledge of the deity in question. *Hanumān's dhyāna* caused him more difficulties.

> "I constantly pray to the God *Hanumān*, the son of *Mrut* and the [devout] servant of *Shri Rāma*; who is surrounded by great warriors like *Angada*; who has a fearsome appearance; who is as bright as millions of suns; whose eyes seem to be burning like those of the God of Death; who shouts very loudly and bearing a mountain in his hands runs after *Rāvana* saying "You wretch, stand on the battle field [and fight]".

(***Hanumāna dhyāna***
Mahāsailam samutpatyam dhāvatam Rāvanam prati
Tistha tistha rane dusta ghora ravam [sama srjanah]
Laksanan [sarulang] raudram [kālāmtakot jams dhaman]
Jaladangi lasad netram surya koti samaprabham
Angadaih mahāviraih vestitam rudra rupini
Mārutī satatam dhyāye deva Sri Rāma sevaka).

Referring to the text, Jagannātha began to explain:

> "The story of the birth of *Hanumān* is there. The day *Hanumān* saw *Rāma* he got his power. He was so powerful that nobody could match him neither in heaven nor on the earth. Not even the sun and moon were as powerful as him. *Rābana* and other demons feared him when they saw him. But though he has that power, he is powerless without *Rāma*. Now look at the figure, he has a mountain in one had, and a mace (*gada*) in the other and he is enormous",

This is a clear example of how Jagannātha's explanation builds upon the story of *Rāma* as he knows it rather than the text he read aloud. When asked whether he found some of the *dhyānas* difficult, Jagannātha said:

> "Yes there are difficult *slokas*. One is bound to understand by thinking a lot. We who have experience must use our knowledge to make up for the fact that something is incomprehensible".

From the above it is clear that Jagannātha only partially understands the *slokas* he has copied in his book, and in several cases only a few words. His explanations are mainly founded upon his knowledge of the *purānas* and the sketches which help to remind him of the various details. The above analysis amply demonstrates that it is the collection of *slokas* rather than their meaning which is of importance to the Master Craftsman. This indicates that Jagannātha, with his collection of *sāstras*, has done his best to live up to his perception of the demands of the upper layers of the art world: the need to have a profound knowledge of the texts.

Painters' Views of and Need for Texts

Despite Nārāyana Mahāranā's dismissal of question number seven in the form discussed earlier, he found that it was necessary to have some knowledge of *silpasāstras* to be able to paint *patta* paintings. *Silpasāstras* included in his definition the *Rāmāyana, Mahābhārata, Krishnaleelā* and other *purānas*[77]. Hari Mahāranā (A.2.), also from Puri, was of the opinion that *Chitrakāras* do not need to use *silpasāstras* but must be familiar with

77 When the painters were asked whether they are familiar with *silpasāstras*, the author of the questionnaire presumably intended a part of the *Visnu dharmotara*. The painters, however, replied that they knew the *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata*.

Rāmāyana and *Mahābhārata* to know the stories they paint. He stressed that Jagannātha Mahāpātra is the only *Chitrakāra* who knows about *sāstras*.

In general the painters do not know the sanskrit *dhyānas*. Arjunā Mahāranā (E.2.1.) from Dānda Sāhi was of the opinion that all painters ought to have a book like Jagannātha Mahāpātra's:

> "Actually everybody should have it, but the fact is that the idea of keeping such a book for our sons and their sons has not come to our minds. Even if we know how to make such a book, it needs time and knowledge of *slokas* and *sāstras*. We can make drawings but we do not have the *slokas* which conform precisely to the image".

The last part of the statement is particularly interesting. Arjunā is saying that for *patta* painters, the painting comes before the *slokas*. The need for texts, reflected in Jagannātha Mahāpātra's collection and book, is likely to have been imposed on the painters from the higher levels of the art world where theoretical reflections take place independently of practice.

Arjunā went on to say that the only reason why Jagannātha keeps the book is to show it as a collection of old things to visitors from abroad and to say that they (Jagannātha and his students') work according to the old texts. He stressed, however, that it is important to paint according to the *dhyānas*:

> "The book has everything about the colour needed, the weapons needed for the hands and other things too. If an order is done according to the *sloka* then the painting is thought to be worthy of God (*thākurā jogya* [fit for God])"

According to Arjunā the painters never read *purānas*, but listen when other people read aloud. They do, however, consult books when they need to establish the chronology of a story[78]. Once his cousin Ananta Mahāranā (E.1.2.) had got an order for a *patta* painting depicting the *Rāmāyana* story with more than a hundred illustrations. The painters had then hired a priest

78 This need is also of recent origin, one of the results of the "story painting" design.

(*pandit*) and during three days he recited *Rāmāyana* while the painters noted possible illustrations[79].

Despite Arjunā's statement there are a few painters who have begun to read *purānas* to refresh their memory before starting a new painting. This is particularly the case in Bhubaneshwar, but also in Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi although the people who read *purānas* there were not usually painters. There were however some exceptions as evident from the books borrowed at the local library in Raghurājpur (cf. chapter 1, p. 60).

The discussion of painters' response to the English form, which they were required to fill in to participate in the competition, showed the clash between the expectations of the upper layers of the art world of theoretical, textual knowledge and the actual (practical) knowledge of the painters. We have seen how the awards passed down from the upper layers of the art world affect social relations amongst painters at the local level. The first national award was given to a painter in Raghurājpur with consequences not only for his position in the village but also, more generally, for the status of the village. The fame was, however, cause for concern for the painter who felt he could not live up to what he conceived to be the expectations of the art world. In what can best be described as a pathetic mimicry, he therefore collected a broad variety of texts, several of which he did not understand, in an attempt to incorporate into his knowledge what he thought was expected of him. Jagannātha Mahāpātra is still the only painter who possesses such a collection of texts.

79 This happened sometime during the beginning of the 1970s. The *patta* was never completed and is still with Ananta Mahāranā.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have aimed to show the diversity in perceptions of *patta* paintings among the different members and layers of the art world. Whereas some give priority to contemporary market demands others are concerned with "pure aesthetics" or symbolic content. It has been demonstrated how conceptions of the upper layers of the art world, founded upon ideas of the purity of tradition and demonstrated in what is thought to be detached and purely aesthetic observations, has fundamental consequences on the social life of painters. This was demonstrated in the discussion of the change in significance of an award. At the upper layers of the art world an award signifies superior craftsmanship and is concerned only with "pure" aesthetics. At the local level of the art world a whole set of other meanings is attached to an award, which concern, among other things, social relations. The affects of awards on the social relations of painters and the resulting renown of the village of Raghurājpur are among the concerns which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 7
Cooperation and Conflict
amongst Painters of Puri District

Several of the tourists who visited Raghurājpur during my stay praised the beauty and the peace of the village. Some mentioned how lovely it was to see so many people engaged in "colourful craft production". A photographer wondered whether all villages in India would be like this "having so many pictures". How does this romantic image of Raghurājpur fit in with the villagers experiences of their lives as craft producers?

In this chapter I discuss the relations amongst the painters in the district of Puri looking at their cooperation and occasional conflicts arising from their differential success. The number of tourists visiting Raghurājpur has been increasing since 1987 when Raghurājpur was officially declared a "Crafts Village". What has this meant for the social relations in the village?

A vignette illustrating the social relations amongst painters as I perceived them in Raghurājpur in 1988-89 is followed by a discussion of these relations 3-4 years later (1991-92), to convey an idea of the rapid changes which have taken place within the village.

Social Relations amongst Painters of Raghurājpur, Winter 1988-89

Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.) had asked his former student Sarat Chandra Swain (L.) to work for him for a couple of weeks. Business was good that winter and as a result the household was continuously short of paintings. Sarat came after his morning meal and sat down to help Rabindra, with whom he had been apprenticed. Within the next couple of days they had to

finish an order from Bombay for a large *patta* depicting the ten avatars of *Visnu*.

Rabindra had also continued to work for Jagannātha after he had completed his apprenticeship. However, his marriage had been arranged and he had therefore decided to begin working independently in order to increase his income.

Tophāna patiently corrected one of the new apprentices. Seven year old Kumar had been told to chalk swans on the floor. Tophāna was then 23 and had been apprenticed to Jagannātha since he was 15. He was still not as skilled as either Rabindra or Sarat and was therefore paid less. Still, it was Tophāna rather than his elder brother who maintained their household in Puri.

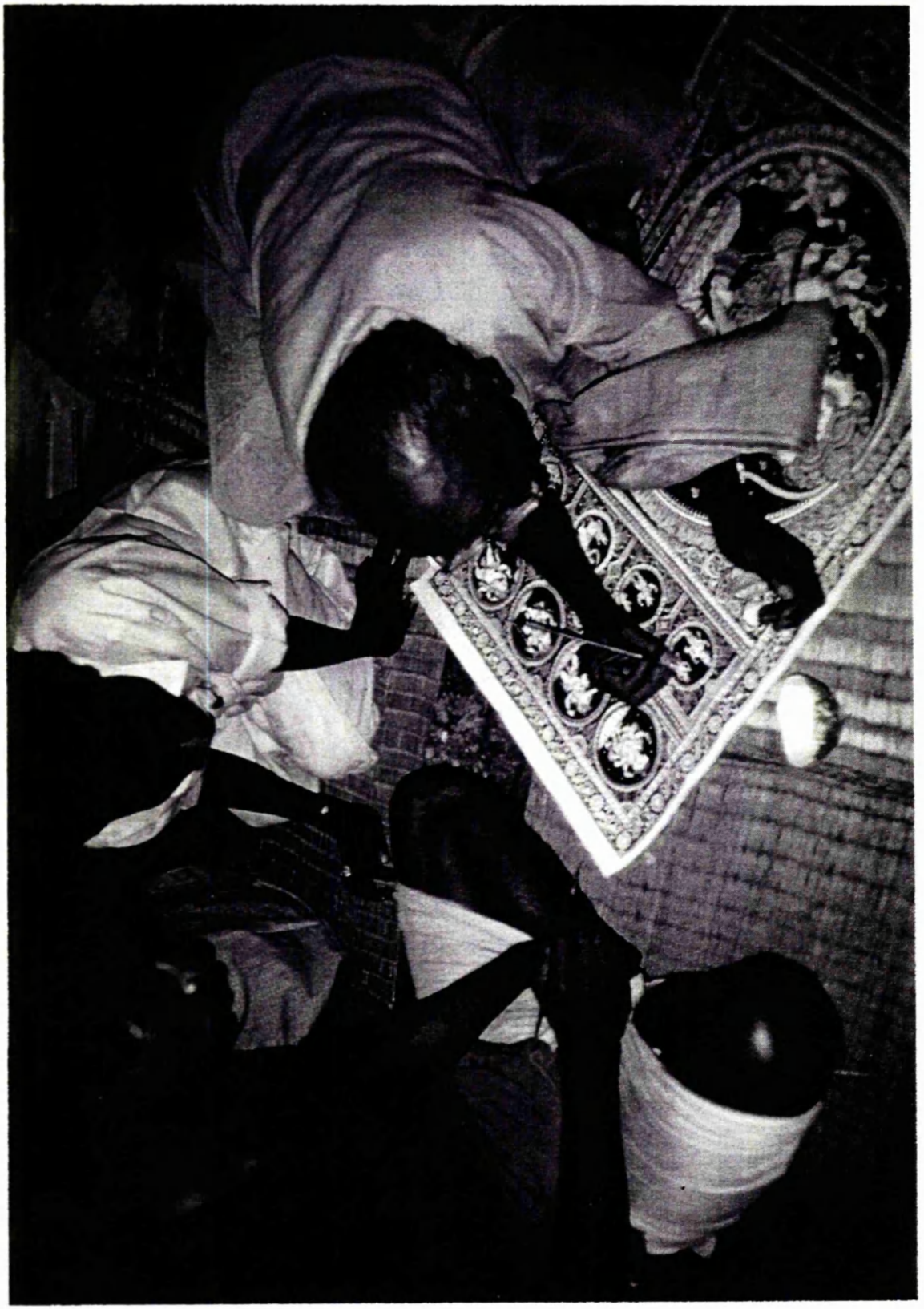
Jagannātha entered the drawing room. He had spent the morning cooking lunch for the household. His wife Tikinā, who suffered from low blood pressure, had stumbled while boarding a bus and had broken her ankle. Jagannātha therefore spent more time in the kitchen than he would otherwise have done - a task he thoroughly enjoyed. When Jagannātha saw Kumar's attempted swan he said:

> "What is that - a crane? A swan looks like this"

With a few, quick strokes of the brush he sketched a swan on the floor and showed Kumar how to draw over the swan again and again to get the feeling of the movement in his hand. Later that afternoon Jagannātha corrected the work of his apprentices. This guidance addressed the students' lack of knowledge of mythology which had resulted in faults in their depiction of deities. Jagannātha commented:

> "It must be proved [clearly shown] (*pramānita hebā darkār*) that the figure is *Siva*, so *Siva's* drum (*dambaru*) and his trident (*trisula*) should be painted

Figure 92: Jagannātha Mahāpātra guides his apprentices, Raghurājpur 1991.



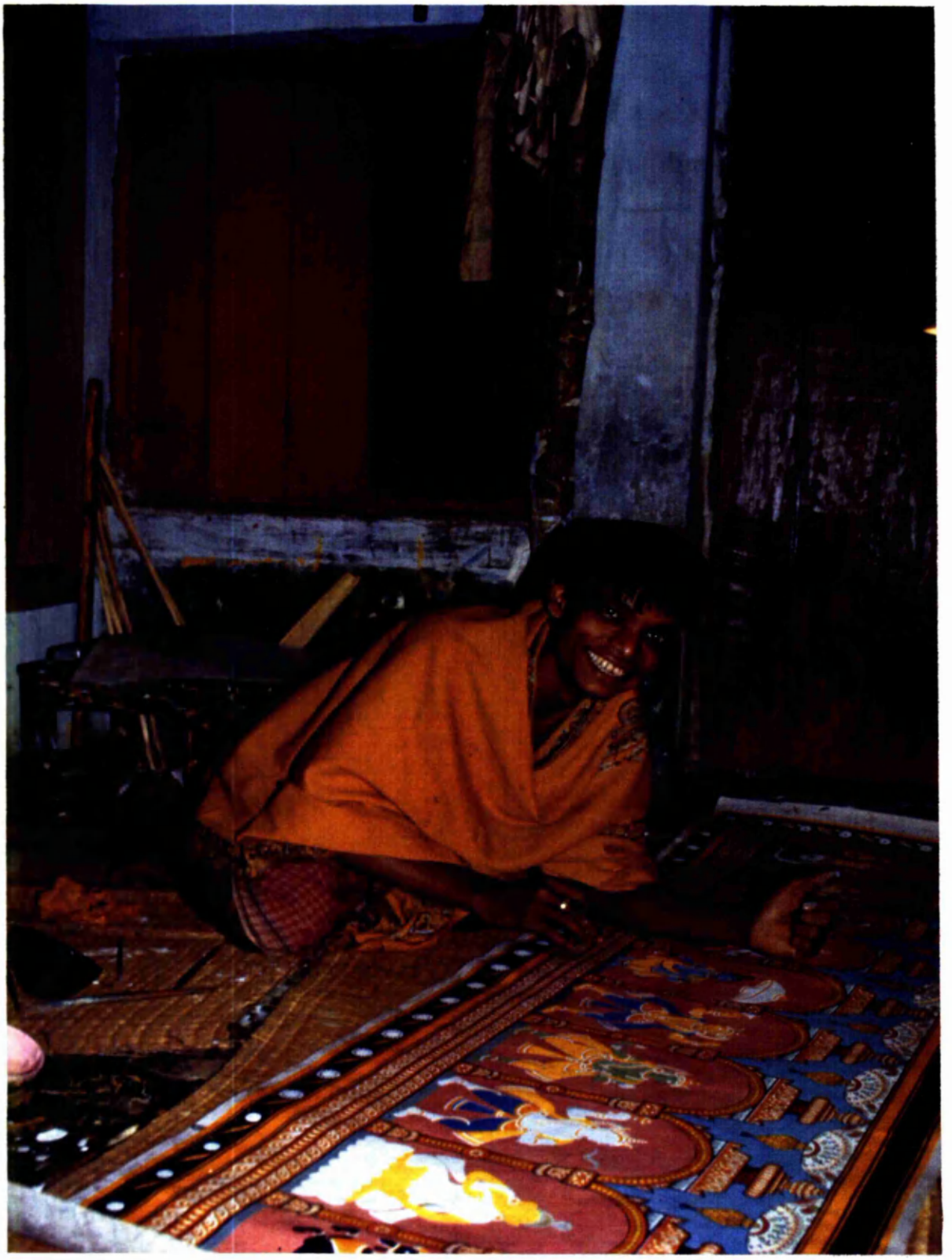
with a little bit of white. Here *Ganesh* is defeating *Nandi* and *Bhrungi*, but what is the proof [clear indication] (*pramāna*)?"

That day the atmosphere in the household was different due to Sudarshana's (B.2.1.) absence. He had taken the night train to Calcutta in order to deliver some paintings to a businessman. It was one of Jagannātha's greatest regrets that he had himself never had a son. It did not help that his younger brother's son Sudarshana had never really been interested in painting. He did paint now and then but, in general, preferred to spend long afternoons at Chandanpur market with his friends. The difference in atmosphere was caused by the relief of the younger students, who always feared Sudarshana's easily aroused anger caused by their mistakes.

Tophāna spent the day decorating (making *sankhapatā*) on a stack of small (8" x 6") *pattas*. Any day now the middleman who sold to tourists staying at the small lodges along Puri beach would come to collect the whole lot. As with all painting work in the village, these paintings were commercially driven. But unlike some of the more important orders for big and carefully executed paintings, these small and roughly executed ones did not require great concentration. Even the anthropologist (a novice in the craft) was allowed to join in. The painters of the village called this kind of work "business work" (*byabasāya kāma*) or *Chālu kāma* (cf. chapter 5, p. 299) expressions which denote inferior quality.

In an easy frame of mind, chatting and munching *chudā* (uncooked, flattened rice), Tophāna gave the *patta* the required decoration. This laid-back way of working was entirely different from the way of Sarat and Rabindra. Their serious expressions and bent backs expressed a stern concentration. If the power supply did not fail, they might just finish the order in time. Although some painters have kerosene lamps, the light from these is not sufficient to paint fine and detailed executions without straining ones' eyes.

Figure 93: Tophāna Mahāranā painting a *patta* **depicting *Visnu's* ten avatars, Raghurājpur 1988.**



In the afternoon the old mask painter Kunja Mahāranā paid a visit to get the latest news. The postman almost always delivered all the letters of the village to Jagannātha's household, for which reason this was the best place to go for information and gossip. However, Jagannātha was busy making sketches (*tipanā*) for a couple of new *pattas* and was not in the mood to chat. Kunja sat for a while and then decided to go to the market in Chandanpur. At the stairs he met Bābājī Mahāranā (F.) from next door.

Bābājī Mahāranā had come on one of his regular visits to borrow fifty rupees. He supplied Jagannātha with whatever he needed by way of *jatrī pattis* and *thiā badhiās* (cf. chapter 3, figures 21, 29) as long as Jagannātha made the *tipanā* and paid him in advance. In 1989 Bābājī and Lakshmana Mahāranā were the only painters in Raghurājpur who still made *thiā badhiā* paintings. Like Bābājī, Lakshmana depended on Jagannātha's help to make the sketch (*tipanā*), as he found it difficult to remember all the imagery needed to conform to the convention. Lakshmana was often seen in Jagannātha's household where he helped in preparing items for festivals (such as *Rāma's* bow or *Durgā's* ornaments). As mentioned in chapter 4, he also assisted Jagannātha whenever he made clay figures (*māti murtīs*) for *pujā*, a task for which Lakshmana was paid on a daily basis.

On his way back from visiting Lingarāj Mahāranā's (C.1.1) household, Māguni Mahāpātra (I.2.2.1.) came to say that Lingarāj's father, Mukunda had asked me to come for a snack (*tiffin*). Māguni complained that his eyes were aching due to the strain of painting the minute details of a new design he had created. He sat for a while and then went back home to continue his work.

This was a day like any other day at the Master Craftsman's household. People continuously strolled in and out, even more than they would in other

households, because, among other reasons, it was one of the only households which had space enough for several people.

When I arrived for *tiffin*, Lingarāj and Mukunda were painting wooden *Jagannātha* figures, purchased from the carpenter in the village[1]. It was difficult to find a place to sit because the whole floor was covered with figures and colour containers made of coconut shells.

Mukunda was upset because I had not eaten in their household for a long time. When I first arrived in the village in December 1988, I had eaten in Mukunda's house. He was then the president of the cooperative. Jagannātha, however, had taken offence and Mukunda advised me to agree to stay and eat in Jagannātha's house to avoid any trouble.

This instance which gave an insight into Jagannātha's position in the village was soon followed by another similar one, which has already been mentioned in chapter 6. As I have described Jagannātha (when celebrating the 24th anniversary of his national award) requested the villagers to ensure that the co-villager and middleman Bānāmbara Nāyaka did not sell crafts in Raghurājpur and he threatened to move to Konarak if Bānāmbara's sales did not immediately come to an end.

In the 1980's Bānāmbara Nāyaka had settled as a middleman in Raghurājpur. He was the first of three men of *Nahaka jāti* (see chapter 1, table 4) to begin selling crafts. Bānāmbara had never produced any crafts himself, but found that dealing with them might be a way out of his financial difficulties as an astrologer with little or no work. Until some of the younger painters had begun to sell from the cooperative, Bānāmbara had an advantage in comparison to the other people selling crafts in the village because his house was situated right at the entrance of Raghurājpur. Apart

1 Rather than neem wood, these figures were carved in mango wood. Neem wood, which is more expensive, is only used when people have ordered figures to be used for *pujā*.

from the *pattas* he had purchased from painters of Dānda Sāhi and occasionally also Raghurājpur, he also dealt with paper masks, wooden figures, and toys[2].

Bānāmbara collaborated with the *patta* painter Kālucharana Barika (K.) (former student of Jagannātha Mahāpātra) who lived at the other end of the village. This location was a great disadvantage because many tourists could not be bothered to go to Kālucharana's end of the village. Kālucharana brought his paintings to Bānāmbara's household where the latter would try to sell them. If the tourists left without purchasing any paintings, a young boy would run down the lane to Kalucharana's household bringing his and some of Bānāmbara's other paintings[3]. It was Kālucharana's job to convince the tourists to pay his household a visit. It was not uncommon that they ended up buying what they had dismissed half an hour earlier.

Jagannātha's threat to move from Raghurājpur to Konarak was taken very seriously by the handicraft producers. There was a general feeling that potential customers only came to Raghurājpur to see the Master Craftsman and that they would stop coming if he was no longer present, resulting in financial loss for the other craftsmen of Raghurājpur. It was in particular Mukunda Mahāranā (C.1.) who advocated that Jagannātha's demand was met.

It was not only for the sale of their paintings that many painters depended on Jagannātha. As mentioned, Bābājī (F.) and Lakshmana, for example, depended on Jagannātha for making sketches for *thiā badhiā* paintings. Although Jagannātha had not been leader (*mukhiā*) since Gopāla Mahāranā

2 The majority of mask makers in Raghurājpur were in continuous need of money and Bānāmbara was one of the persons to whom they could turn for an advance.

3 This was never noticed by the tourists who in the mean time would have gone to visit one of the other households in the village.

(E.1.3.1.) took over the position in 1984, Jagannātha still had more than a say in village matters.

It is important to understand that this was not only a question of power in any simple sense. Amongst the majority of the craftsmen in Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi there was a deeply felt respect for Jagannātha, who had been actively involved in the revival of the tradition of painting ever since the visit of Halina Zealey (cf. chapter 2). He was widely acknowledged as one of the main reasons why tourists had begun to come to Raghurājpur and thereby provided villagers with a source of income. Moreover Jagannātha was acknowledged as a source of knowledge on designs and on mythology, *purānas* and *sāstras* (cf. chapter 6, section II). Also the sheer number of apprentices he trained played a considerable role in maintaining his status. With so many apprentices he was the main teacher of *patta* painting in the village and thus providing a means to earn a living.

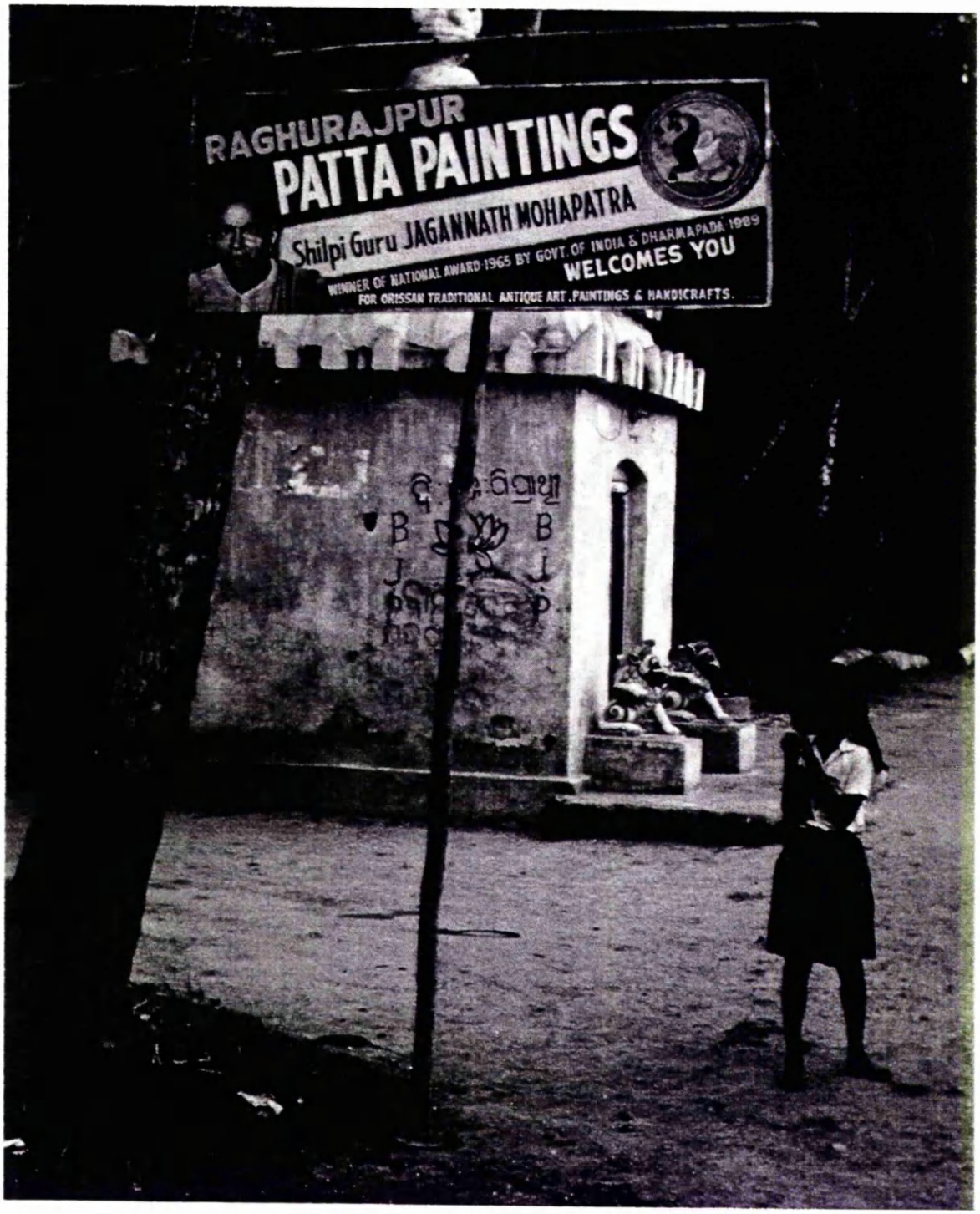
Social Relations amongst Painters of Raghurājpur, November 1991

On a relatively cool November afternoon in 1991, the tailor from Chandanpur bazaar peddled to Raghurājpur as fast as possible to inform his father-in-law Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.), that a group of tourists from the exclusive hotel "Toshali Sands" (situated between Puri and Konarak), was approaching Raghurājpur[4]. On his way he passed the new signboard advertising the crafts sold in Jagannātha's household (see figure 94). The text read as follows:

> "Raghurājpur. *Patta* paintings. Silpi Guru Jagannātha Mahāpātra winner of National Award - 1965 by Government of India and Dharmapada - 1989.

4 The hotel arranges tours for its guests to the tourist attractions of the area, one of them being Raghurājpur.

Figure 94: Jagannātha Mahāpātra's signboard, Raghurājpur 1991.



Welcomes you. For Orissan traditional antique art, paintings & handicrafts"[5].

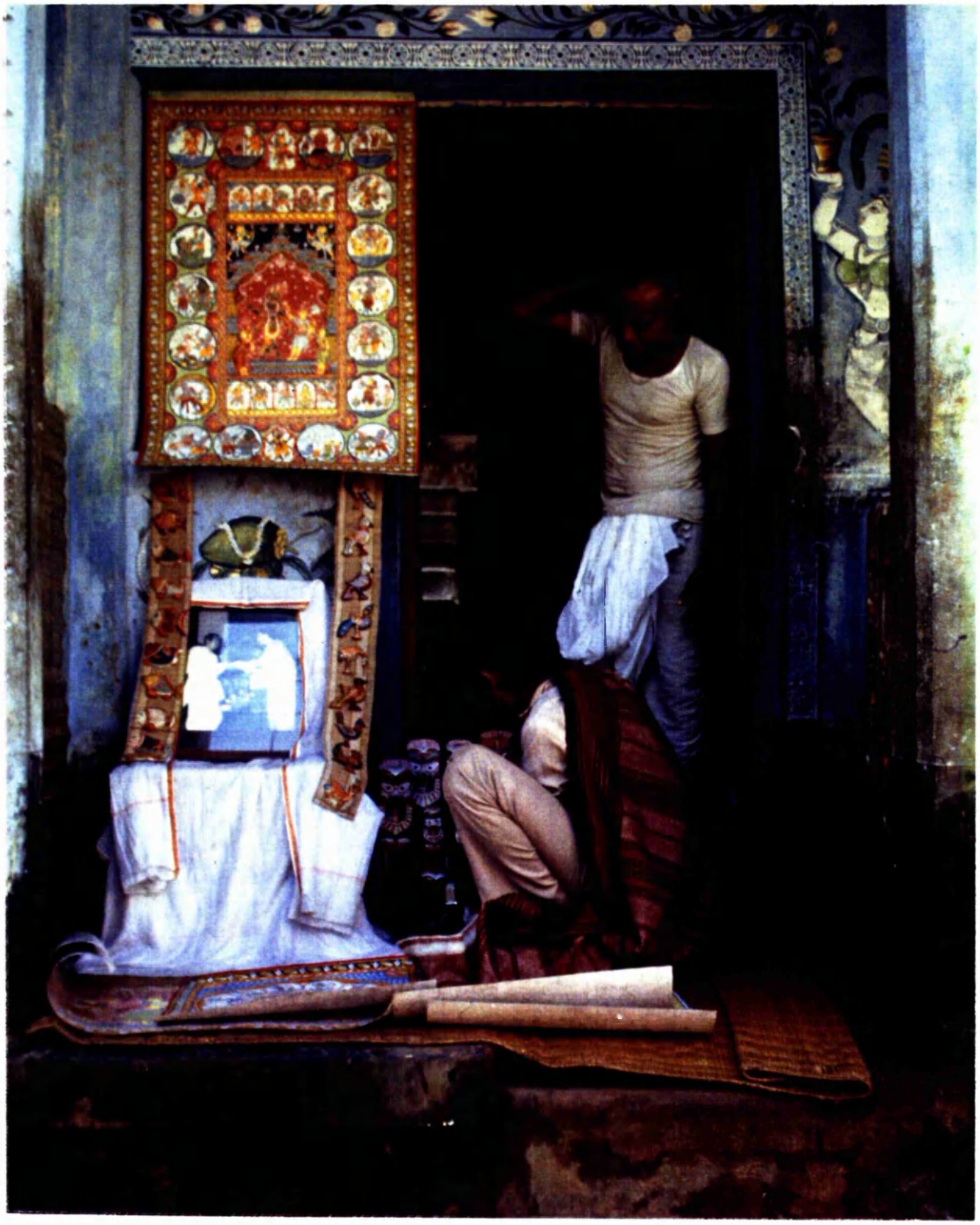
As soon as he got the message Sudarshana cycled down the lane to the cooperative where Jagannātha was already present. Sudarshana, the only villager who spoke some English, presented his "father" to the tourists as the Master Craftsman of the village, not mentioning the fact that Raghurājpur has not less than three Master Craftsmen. Jagannātha immediately wanted to lead the tourists to his household but they decided to see the paintings which were being made in the cooperative by Jagannātha's former students Sarat Chandra (L.) and Rabindra. Neither of them were members of the cooperative but simply used the building as a convenient place to work. As mentioned in chapter 1, the cooperative was situated at the entrance to the village and the painters working there were therefore often the first to meet visiting tourists.

While the tourists were busy in the cooperative, Mukunda Mahāranā (C.1.) exhibited the paintings purchased by his son Lingarāj not only in front of his own house but also in front of the men's wrestling house (*jāgā-ghara*) in the centre of the village. On their way from the cooperative to Jagannātha's household the tourists therefore stopped to see these paintings displayed by Mukunda. Several paintings and not less than Rs. 7000 changed hands. As the tourists had spent all their money purchasing paintings from Mukunda, they decided to return to their hotel rather than seeing the paintings in Jagannātha's house.

Jagannātha was very upset when the tourists left without even visiting his house and complained to Mukunda. They began to argue and the argument soon escalated into what was the beginning of a serious conflict between the two households. Although a different terminology was used the

5 The painters were aware that many Westerners want old paintings but found this odd. Some painters kept ten year old paintings and treated them roughly in the hope that this might add to their "antique" appearance.

Figure 95: Mukunda Mahāranā supervises the preparation for customers' arrival.



argument had a character not unlike the one presented below, which took place in 1991 between two other competing craftsmen of Puri district. I have tried to preserve the anonymity of the two partes:

Craftsman A said to craftsman B that he was nothing more than a beggar (*bhikharī*), an insult B immediately returned saying that A himself was a beggar, the way he always rushes to grab tourists. A then shouted "you eat fire" (*niān gila*), which means you eat up everything even if it is not yours. Again B returned the insult calling A bastard (*bedhapilā*)[6] and even worse *bedha udouchha*[7].

Whatever the content of Jagannātha's and Mukunda's argument, it made Jagannātha literally shake with rage and returning to his household he shouted at Mukunda:

> "You will be punished for this one day. I will tell everything to Helle [the anthropologist], nothing will be kept secret and it will become known in the world what is going on in this village".

The argument shook the whole of Raghurājpur and the majority of the craftsmen were very upset. Nārāyana Mahāranā (C.1.-s-i-l.) from Puri related how Lingarāj had turned up to collect some paintings and had narrated the incident. He felt terribly embarrassed about the whole thing and kept asking what Helle would think of their *jāti*. Purna Chandra Mahāpātra (I.2.1.2.) also expressed his concern and said:

> "They should not behave like that, what will the tourists think? They will stop coming".

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6 or literally child of a concubine.

7 This is an extremely strong insult which means that a man's wife has had sexual relations before marriage, such a woman being called *bedha*.

When discussing the cause of the conflict the following day, Jagannātha explained that he had intended the sign board, advertising the work of his studio, as a countermeasure against the increasing competition. He also said that his main complaint against Mukunda was that he or his household had not made any of the paintings they had sold. For that reason Jagannātha called them businessmen and said that the lane opposite Jagannātha's household was nothing but a "business lane" (*byabasāya sāhi*). Like most other painters Jagannātha made a sharp distinction between households which make and sell *patta* paintings and those which only sell.

In 1991-92 the majority of the *pattas* sold in Jagannātha's house were not actually made there. The actual producers had sold their paintings to Jagannātha and were paid according to the square inch system of the government corporation. The paintings were then sold as products of Jagannātha's household.

A few days later a village meeting was held. It was requested that the small signboard saying "Taxistand" hanging on the banyan tree in front of the cooperative be removed[8]. Furthermore it was agreed that nobody should be allowed to use the cooperative to paint or sell crafts unless, of course, it was for the benefit of the cooperative.

The cooperative in Raghurājpur was even worse off in 1992 than it had been in 1988. Not a single one of Utkalikā's orders for paintings had been carried out because people preferred to sell independently. They found the ineffectiveness which characterised all dealings with the cooperative

8 Before the signboard was placed on the tree, tourists used to drive directly to Jagannātha's household. It was, in particular, some of the younger painters (former students of Jagannātha) who found that it was unfair that their *guru* got all the customers. They therefore decided that all vehicles should stop at the entrance of the village and put up the signboard.

unbearable. Craftsmen often had to wait several weeks for their payment sometimes even months[9].

It was not only Jagannātha who felt threatened by the competition from the group of younger painters (all former students of his) who had begun to make and sell paintings in the cooperative. This also affected other painters in the village. It was therefore possible for Jagannātha to convince the village committee that the young painters should be denied access to the cooperative[10].

Amongst the young painters who stopped vehicles when they tried to pass the banyan tree, were Sarat Chandra Swain (L.), Laksmidhara Mahāranā, Rabindra Mahāpātra, and Dīnabandhu Mahāpātra (the latter two from the neighbouring village of Khāspasāk) all former students of Jagannātha.

The four of them had formed a group which made it possible to fulfil orders even for big and time consuming *pattas*. In the autumn of 1992, Laksmidhara had recently joined the other three:

> "When I worked for the old man (*budhā*) [this expression was commonly used amongst the villagers when they referred to Jagannātha] I earned Rs.180 per month - but is that enough to keep our stomachs full? I now make Rs. 800 per month, so this suits me better".

The other members of the group also had to support their households and had therefore stopped working for Jagannātha.

Jagannātha felt that his students had been disloyal to him and called the four young men "deities" (*debatās*) indicating that they thought themselves too important. When Laksmidhara left the household of his *guru* Jagannātha

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9 The Government officials responsible always claimed that this was not true. Evidence, however, suggests that this was often the case.

10 The then *mukhiā*, Gopāla Mahāranā (E.1.3.1.), was himself a painter and it was in his interest to stop the younger painters selling in front of the cooperative.

called him *Rāhu*[11], most likely because he would now "swallow" the customers of the village[12].

The fact that almost all his skilled students left the household within a few years caused the old painter a lot of anxiety. Even if Baraju (N.1.) and Sarat Chandra (L.) would never refuse to work for Jagannātha in times of need because "one cannot refuse to work for one's *guru*" his household had difficulties keeping its standard. Due to his age and shaking hands Jagannātha was no longer capable of drawing thin black lines (*saru kalā*) for example, and even the more experienced of his students such as Tophāna, who stayed with him, could not yet make *saru kalā* of a high quality.

Tophāna was the only one of Jagannātha's former students who chose to continue working for Jagannātha. Occasionally he would go to his household in Puri to help his father painting for *Brahmin* patrons but in general he stayed in Jagannātha's household. When asked why he continued, Tophāna explained in detail:

> "If someone talk bad about his *guru* the person will go to hell (*guru nindā narka jānti*). I am happy that I am not amongst the students who are on bad terms with Jagannātha *mausā*, I try my best not to be condemned (*nindita*) by him during the last years of his life. He has arranged a "rice pot" for me and my household[13]... so one should forget his dark side. I will not do business for anybody else. If I make mistakes Jagannātha points them out, commenting that this nose is not good or these fingers are not fine. He is my *guru*".

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11 The planet *Rāhu* causes eclipses by attempting to devour the sun and the moon. The myth of *Rāhu* is closely related to the churning of the ocean and the strife of the gods and demons for the possession of the ambrosia and the sovereignty of the world. In astronomy *Rāhu* is considered to be the ascending node of the moon - the point where the moon's orbit crosses the ecliptic (Daniélou 1985:315-16).

12 Often stubborn people are called *Rāhu*. However, *Rāhu* could perhaps also be seen as a metaphor for the expression commonly used by the villagers: "the big fish swallows everything and the small fish gets nothing".

13 By which Tophāna means that Jagannātha has made Tophāna self reliant.

Tophāna continued, reciting the famous sanskrit *sloka* devoted to *gurus*:

> *"guru Brahmā, guru Visnu, gurudeba Mahesvara, guru Sākshyāt parambrahma tasmei Shrī gurabe namah (guru Brahmā, guru Visnu, guru lord Mahesvara, guru is exactly like the supreme soul, salutation to him)".*

Tophāna was an exception in his loyalty to Jagannātha. Other painters closely related to Jagannātha would occasionally sell their paintings to other middlemen when appropriate. An example of this occurred during a visit to Sarat Chandra's (L.) house where I came across a painting depicting the Ashoka war (cf. chapter 3, figure 48). Some days earlier I had seen a relative of Jagannātha working on the painting in his home in Puri. Rather than selling the paintings to Jagannātha at a cheap price, the relative chose to sell to Sarat Chandra[14]. This was not to be conveyed to Jagannātha who normally got the work of this relative.

It is commonly accepted that one must obey the wishes of one's *guru* (and this is a common remark amongst the painters of Puri district). However, if this request is considered unreasonable by a painter he will disregard it. When coming to Raghurājpur to deliver some *pattas* to Lingarāj, Nārāyana said:

> "I am tired of all this nonsense. I have often said to Jagannātha *mausā* that he must accept that his students leave him at some point. After all they have to support their families".

After the older and more skilled of his students had left the households, Jagannātha had to get other painters to supply him with paintings in order to have sufficient paintings for the customers. A more regular exchange therefore began to take place between him and the households of Guna Mahāranā (N.) and Ananta Mahāranā (E.1.2.) (both from Dānda Sāhi). Besides more palm leaf carvings were bought in the neighbouring village of Khāspasāk.

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14 Jagannātha had often helped this relative and he would therefore be expected to sell his paintings at a favourable price.

Moreover, Jagannātha increasingly depended upon painters such as Mamatā (O.) who, as mentioned in chapter 1, was taught by him under one of the government's schemes for scheduled castes. Their relationship was one of mutual dependence. In 1991-92 Mamatā's husband worked as a daily labourer and his income therefore fluctuated. As a result the household largely depended upon Mamatā's income. She, in turn, depended upon the canvas (*patti*) and the sketches provided by Jagannātha.

During her one year training course, Mamatā had worked in Jagannātha's studio but later, due to gossip, she was forced to work in her home instead. It was the male painters in particular who complained about Mamatā and her work. According to the majority of painters she did not have a good hand and they insisted that the only reason Jagannātha gave her work was that she accepted work on a low salary (she got a maximum of Rs. 25 a day whereas other painters who have served their apprenticeship charged a minimum of Rs. 50). Many painters forgot that Mamatā had only been painting since the end of the 1980s and therefore could not be expected to do much better. She might have been considered a threat because she had entered a sphere otherwise entirely dominated by males. Other women assisted their husbands but never worked independently. Sunālatā, the wife of Dīnabandhu Mahāpātra (I.2.3.1.), was, as mentioned in chapter 1, an exception. However, her contributions were "invisible" because her paintings were sold with other *pattas* produced in the same household.

When Mamatā and her husband were forced to leave the house they had rented, Jagannātha arranged that they could stay in Benudhara Mahāpātra's house[15]. However, Benudhara one day sent his son to tell Mamatā to leave because they needed the house. According to Jagannātha that was simply an excuse for kicking out Mamatā.

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15 Benudhara had not used his house in Raghurājpur since he moved to Bhubaneshwar to teach at the Training Centre.

During the summer of 1992, Mamatā often expressed a wish to begin to work independently in order to enhance her income[16]. However, without Jagannātha's guidance and sketches, she was not able to complete a *patta.* Moreover she was not familiar with the process of making *patti.* She also felt obliged to accede to Jagannātha's request to work for him because, as she said, "one cannot refuse to assist one's *guru* if asked for help". This was also the reason why Sarat Chandra Swain (L.) still occasionally worked for Jagannātha even though the bulk of his work was undertaken in his newly formed group.

By 1992 Jagannātha's household did not have the central position it used to have in Raghurājpur. The almost empty studio with a couple of young apprentices and Tophāna working now and then was a continuous reminder of that. Still, the big cupboard in the drawing room was full of paintings waiting to be sold. Whenever tourists came, Jagannātha or Sudarshana would unlock the cupboard to display the stock.

These paintings were, as I have already indicated, acquired from various painters mainly from outside Raghurājpur. Even Jagannātha's "son-in-law" had begun to supply the household. He had only begun to paint after he had married Jagannātha's brother's daughter and was not yet able to follow the conventions of *patta* painting. When asked, Jagannātha with a tired gesture described the paintings as "modern art" rather than *patta* painting[17]. That the Master Craftsman still chose to sell these paintings indicated the

16 Her reason was not, as some might think, to get a chance to be acknowledged as a painter in her own right.

17 Jagannātha's use of the English word "modern" denoted that his son-in-law's paintings were made in a style different from *patta.* It was also a way of escaping an evaluation of the paintings. For Jagannātha, however, "modern" did not, in general, denote bad. He often stressed that modern art was not different from *patta* painting in that there could be high quality modern art as well as bad modern art.

problems he continued to face in acquiring a sufficient number of paintings for sale[18].

Paintings were also bought from the painters of Dānda Sāhi. As tourists almost never came to that village the painters there had to sell their work elsewhere, most commonly Raghurājpur. Ananta Mahāranā (E.1.2.) blamed the renown of Raghurājpur and the cooperative which he thought favoured the craftsmen of Raghurājpur[19]. Bibhu Kumar, one of Ananta's sons could often be seen cycling to Raghurājpur with a roll of paintings. Even if related to Jagannātha (B.1.), Ananta's household in general preferred to sell to Lingarāj with whom Bibhu had formed a close friendship (through Māguni (I.2.2.1.), Bibhu's brother-in-law).

However, when Jagannātha needed assistance, Ananta's household was ready to help. An example of this occurred when Jagannātha was given a week's notice to participate in an exhibition held for Pupul Jayakar and the INTACH team (see chapter 6, p. 385-88). It was Ananta's household which provided Jagannātha with a *Ganesh patta* for the exhibition.

Jagannātha had less work in other areas too. In 1992 he made the clay figure (*māti murtī*) for the annual *Durgā pujā* only. Much to Jagannātha's regret the making of the other *murtis* required for *pujās* in the village had been transferred to other painters. For example, the village committee had decided to ask Nārāyana Mahāranā (C.1.-s-i-l.) from Puri to make the *Kārtikesvara murtī*, a task which for years had been Jagannātha's responsibility.

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18 It might of course have been a consideration that a household is expected to show respect to a son-in-law.

19 In Autumn 1992 Ananta managed to convince the District Industries Centre in Puri of the necessity of a cooperative in Dānda Sāhi, cf. chapter 2, figure 10).

Even if he had lost many of his local supporters, Jagannātha still enjoyed the respect of most villagers. This was essential for the old man's self esteem and he continued to carry out what previously could have been seen as symbolic of his position and status in the village. An example was the local festival "*Sāhi jātrā*" when Jagannātha pinned one rupee or five rupee notes on the dresses of those who had performed in front of his veranda.

The people who continued to support Jagannātha were mainly from the generation that had first been taught by him. Amongst his supporters were Bābājī Mahāranā (F.) and Lakshmana Mahāranā (who both worked for him), Dharama Mahāranā and Kunja Mahāranā (the latter renowned for his knowledge of old texts), and the stone carver Jyotindra Das of *Baniā jāti*. The celebration of *Durgā pujā* was just one of the occasions where they all turned up to eat *prasāda* in Jagannātha's household and thus showed him their respect (cf. chapter 4, p. 282).

The changes in the relations amongst painters and in particular the importance given to certain persons was partly caused by a generational shift. Due to his age and related difficulties Jagannātha Mahāpātra, who earlier held an important position in the village, could not continue to work the way he used to. His skilled students had left to begin working on their own and he had no relations who could take over his role since his brothers' son did not have a genuine interest in *patta* painting. Who would then take over Jagannātha Mahāpātra's role as *guru* and dealer of paintings in Raghurājpur?

Painters as Middlemen

Gunu, the eldest son of Lingarāj (C.1.1.), peddled down the lane on his new plastic tricycle. He was enjoying himself immensely, partly because as the only child owning such a vehicle in Raghurājpur, he was followed by a crowd of admiring children from the village.

Lingarāj had just returned from one of his many trips to Delhi loaded with gifts for his two sons, wife and parents. The sale of paintings at a *mela* outside Delhi had been very successful and Lingarāj returned with more than Rs.15,000. From this he would have to pay the providers of the paintings the price which had been fixed before Lingarāj went.

Three years earlier it would have been impossible for Lingarāj to purchase a tricycle. Although he, his parents, and wife had spent all their time painting wooden figures, paper masks and in Lingarāj's case an occasional *patta*, they could only make just enough money to pay the daily expenses. However, things had changed since Lingarāj decided to begin dealing in paintings. He got the idea while going to fairs selling for the cooperative. He then saw that there was a demand for *patta* paintings in other states.

In the beginning Lingarāj brought a few *pattas* made by other painters to sell at the fairs, bypassing the cooperative. A minimum price had been agreed upon and Lingarāj would get whatever the customer paid above that sum. He soon established contacts with businessmen in Bombay, Delhi and Calcutta and started an independent business. He was also the first painter to find a way to deal with their big orders.

Prabatha Ratha, a businessman from Puri, had been contemplating developing some new designs for *pattas* in order to increase the demand. Looking through the existing literature on *patta* and old palm leaf carvings Prabatha had made various sketches and suggestions for possible designs. He had then asked Lingarāj to make a sample of the paintings. Lingarāj passed the order to his brother-in-law Nārāyana Mahāranā, who had the skill required to paint unfamiliar designs.

In Bombay the sample turned out to be a great success and Prabatha received orders for several hundred of each design. Although Lingarāj was

successful securing the order it also posed a new problem for him. How would he be able to get hold of so many similar *pattas*? It was particularly difficult because the design was of an unfamiliar kind.

Lingarāj decided to copy the sample made by Nārāyana using carbon paper to transfer the sketch on *patti*. These were then distributed to seven or eight painters in Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi who completed the paintings. Lingarāj thus created a network which made it possible to undertake even very large orders for similar paintings. This is probably the closest one can get to mechanising a handicraft without loosing the characteristics of handmade things.

However, this was not the only network Lingarāj developed in the years between 1989 and 1991. When he was a student at the Training Centre Lingarāj had (as mentioned in chapter 1) stayed with his father's younger brother Bhāgabata Mahāranā in Bhubaneshwar.

The years he spent in Bhubaneshwar gave Lingarāj ample opportunity to make friends with local painters. Although he knew the majority already (many were from Raghurājpur) there were some from other *jātis* whom he met there for the first time. In 1992, Lingarāj never failed to make a tour of the painter households in Bhubaneshwar before going on one of his business trips. Just as in Raghurājpur, the painters in Bhubaneshwar were happy to sell through him, because they felt, firstly that they could trust him, and secondly that he would do his best not to delay their payment.

However, the painters in Bhubaneshwar often worked with more demanding customers in mind. For example some delivered to the owner of the shop-cum-workshop "Sun Crafts", Mr. G. K. Mahāranā, in Puri. "Sun Crafts" had specialised in *Jagannātha* items[20] but also sold *pattas* to members of the

20 For example *Jagannātha* figures in wood, wooden plates and post cards decorated with *Jagannātha* in one of his many dresses (*besas*).

Figure 96: Nārāyana Mahāranā completes one of Lingarāj Mahāranā's orders.

International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKON). By the spring of 1992, "Sun Crafts" exported *patta* and *tassar* paintings to France. The paintings he sold to ISKON and retailers in France were generally relatively large (5 x 3 feet or above) and finely and delicately executed. During a discussion in August 1992, G.K. Mahāranā described some of the characteristic demands of his customers:

> "My customers want high quality and they are ready to pay for it. You know how Western people are - they want high quality".

His experience of Westerners was based upon his relation to the ISKON Society[21] in Puri and moreover a French art dealer, who had specialised in Oriental arts and crafts. This might explain his conception of Westerners as critical art buyers[22].

The paintings made for "Sun Crafts" were generally finer (delicate lines and patterns) than the ones Lingarāj Mahāranā bought. He most commonly bought less refined *pattas* which cost less and therefore were not so difficult to sell. Orders from "Sun Crafts" were irregular and a painter might not be in the mood to paint a demanding piece of work. Lingarāj was therefore welcomed as an alternative outlet.

In 1989 Lingarāj's household had difficulties making ends meet despite the fact that everybody except the children was engaged in painting masks or wooden figures. Three years later they could easily afford toys for the children, new clothes, jewellery and the repair of the house. The change in their financial situation was due to Lingarāj's initiative to sell paintings

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21 The members of the ISKON society, many of whom spend years in India, are often more critical in their judgement of Indian arts and crafts than other Westerners.

22 Having become used to seeing the kind of paintings bought by tourists staying in the cheap lodges along the beach, this attitude came as quite a surprise. Westerners' way of viewing Indian arts and crafts depends upon the time they have spent in India among other factors.

made by other painters. The success of his work as a middleman was primarily due to Lingarāj's ability to talk with and understand many different people. The change in his position was probably also due to the deteriorating position of Jagannātha Mahāpātra. Some of the people who would otherwise have sold to Jagannātha, now preferred to sell to Lingarāj. He was in other words one of the people poised to take over Jagannātha's role as a dealer in paintings. As far as the role of *guru*-ship is concerned it is uncertain whether any painter in Raghurājpur will be prepared to (or indeed able to) take over Jagannātha's position when time comes.

Another painter who had prospered from the sale of other painters' work (as well as his own) was Arjunā Mahāranā from Dānda Sāhi. Arjunā in many ways stood out from the other painters in Dānda Sāhi, most of whom were his relations. As mentioned in chapter 1, Arjunā had been invited several times to work at the Crafts Museum or abroad. Moreover he frequently travelled to participate in exhibitions or *melas* such as the "The Suraj Kund Crafts *Mela*[23].

One of the consequences of his travels, other than of course the economic advantage, was that Arjunā got the chance to establish contacts with middlemen in Delhi. He therefore spent much of his time travelling back and forth between his village and Delhi. The other painters' attitude to his journeys were mixed, as the following example illustrates. Once a painter from Dānda Sāhi came to Jagannātha Mahāpātra to get his salary and I asked him whether Arjunā was at home. His ironic answer expressed a common feeling amongst the painters:

> "Arjunā, he does not live here, he lives in Delhi and has forgotten how to paint".

23 The "*Suraj Kund Crafts Mela*" has been held on the border between Delhi and Haryana every year since 1987. It is arranged by the Ministry of Tourism, GOI.

The statement (which must be seen in relation to the fact that Arjunā through the sale of paintings, had become financially better off than the rest of the painters in the village) referred to the fact that since Arjunā began to travel he had still less time to paint and therefore relied increasingly on purchasing paintings from other painters. On one of his visits to the Crafts Museum he met an Indian consul stationed in France who invited him to participate in "a week of India" in the village Saint Denis, Summer 1992. The craftsmen (from various Indian states) who participated were paid Rs.150 by the French Government per day but most importantly they were allowed to sell their work. Arjunā returned with a Sony walkman and sufficient cash to continue the construction work on his house and support his household for a considerable time.

Arjunā was critical of what he bought and for that reason he only rarely purchased paintings made in Dānda Sāhi and even less so in Raghurājpur. When receiving an order he would often ask Nārāyana Mahāranā (C.1.-s-i-l.), Gokul Bihari Patnaik (D.) or Bijoy Kumar Parida (H.), the latter two from Bhubaneshwar, to execute it.

To some extent Arjunā and Lingarāj can be seen as parallel figures in Dānda Sāhi on the one hand and Raghurājpur on the other. They were both painters who at some point decided to begin dealing in paintings to add to a meagre income and ended up spending more time travelling and dealing in, rather than producing paintings. It is therefore striking that while Arjunā's business was largely accepted, with the occasional critical remark, that of Lingarāj caused conflicts in Raghurājpur. One reason might have been that Arjunā's business was not perceived as a threat to the painters in Dānda Sāhi whereas Lingarāj in Raghurājpur was seen as a competitor to Jagannātha Mahāpātra as well as the other dealers of paintings in the village.

Painters outside Raghurājpur and their Relation to Paintings and Painters of Raghurājpur

Nārāyana Mahāranā's (C.1.-s-i-l.) eldest daughter had a special place in his heart, reminding him of his first wife Gauri who died within the second year of their marriage. When visiting his former in-laws, he still enjoyed the respect of a son-in-law. The shared grief caused by Gauri's death had brought Nārāyana very close to her brother Lingarāj (C.1.1.) and this relation seemed to have become permanent.

Lingarāj, Nārāyana, and Māguni Mahāpātra (I.2.2.1.) had more than relatives in common. Lingarāj and Māguni were, as mentioned in chapter 1, both taught by Benudhara Mahāpātra and the late Bhāgabata Mahāranā at the Training Centre. During the years Lingarāj stayed in Bhāgabata's house, Nārāyana often came to work for the teacher, whose skill and interest in finding new inspirational sources Nārāyana always praised.

It was not only Bhāgabata who had strongly influenced Nārāyana for he had also been affected by his experience at the workshop on *patta* paintings held at the B.K.College of Art and Crafts. This was apparent in his paintings as well as in his critical attitude to the painters of Raghurājpur. During a discussion in March 1992 Nārāyana said:

> "You [the anthropologist] are interested in *patta* painting and keep photos of Odissi painting[24]. But how many photos of Odissi painting do they [the painters of Raghurājpur] have?. If we find some paintings somewhere we take photos because we are interested. But they are not interested [as we have already seen this is not in fact true]. Their place is just a commercial one (*byabasāya sthali*) and for that reason they just make it like this, and the back ground like that" [Nārāyana made some gestures indicating the way the painters in Raghurājpur work].

24 An obvious example of how I interfered and thus was an active agent in the art world.

The anthropologist's collection of photos had apparently come to play an important role at the local level of the art world. Nārāyana saw the photographs as a measure of one's interest in *patta* paintings and stressed how he and painters from Bhubaneshwar collected photographs of paintings as opposed to the Raghurājpur painters who did not. In fact the painters of Raghurājpur did keep photographs of paintings and Nārāyana's comment should thus not be taken at face value (cf. chapter 5, p. 355-358). It was part of Nārāyana's criticism of their supposed lack of interest in painting other than as a commercial activity.

Later Nārāyana explained in detail how he aimed to make paintings which people would notice, hoping that they would recommend Nārāyana to other customers:

> "Our aim is to make good work and we do not mind spending the required time. Suppose you take this [painting] to someone and he likes what he sees, he might then order two or three more paintings from our household. Or if someone sees one of my paintings in a museum [in fact none of Nārāyana's paintings had been bought by a museum] he might give me another order. In Raghurājpur they do not work that way, they never spend sufficient time but just roll up the paintings and give them to the customers".

Nārāyana constantly referred to the painters of Raghurājpur as examples of craftsmen who did not care for their profession:

> "The painters of Chandanpur [Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi] have an envious mind and do not even want to teach their children properly. That is the sign of their regression. With us however, it is different; we want our children and our craftsmanship to improve. Let the hidden *old style works* come to light, so the children can learn to make good work, only then will Odissi painting survive".

According to Nārāyana it was Bhāgabata Mahāranā who encouraged the painters to take up old motifs in *patta* painting:

> "He was more intelligent than [his brother] Mukunda Mahāranā (C.1.). He was like a *politician*[25]. It was his aim to collect old things in order to make a new kind of work. He wanted to give *patta chitra* a new appearance by mixing it with the ruined paintings[26]. He always collected old things and asked us to make paintings like that. So who has changed our hand? [who has influenced our way of painting]"

For Nārāyana his kin relation to Lingarāj had turned out to be a financial advantage. Unlike the majority of *patta* painters in Puri, Nārāyana had a good connection to Raghurājpur through Lingarāj. This gave him a double advantage. The chance of getting reasonable prices for paintings was greater in Raghurājpur than in Puri because of the visiting tourists[27] and if that failed Lingarāj could sell the paintings on one of his business trips.

Nārāyana's work with Bhāgabata Mahāranā and the three months stay in the workshop had, as previously suggested, influenced his paintings, but it had also changed his way of perceiving *patta* paintings. Echoing the local art specialists Nārāyana argued for the necessity to take up old motifs in new designs in order to infuse life into the *patta* tradition. Moreover, he criticized the *patta* painters of Raghurājpur who in his eyes had no interest in painting other than for commercial gain. This critique should not be seen as a purely aesthetic comment. The criticism was partly a result of the influence from the workshop in the B.K.Art college, but was in all probability also related to the fact that Nārāyana had come to depend on Raghurājpur for the sale of his paintings.

Yet another painter household in Puri had strained relations with the painters of Raghurājpur and, unlike Nārāyana, they refused to sell their paintings to the village. This had its roots in events in the 1950s when the

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25 By which Nārāyana meant a person who travels and, perhaps, more important influences people.

26 By ruined paintings Nārāyana meant the deteriorating wall paintings in the Viranchinarayana temple in Buguda, and old palm leaf or *patta* paintings worn by time.

27 The tourists staying in Puri only rarely visit the households of the *Chitrakāras* staying there and only if accompanied by a guide.

father of Hātī and Hari Mahāranā told his oldest son not to sell any work to the painters from that village. According to Hari (A.2.) this had happened shortly after Zealey had left. She had then passed over her work in the Handicraft Complex in Puri to a man called Subash De and had informed him to buy equally from the painters of Puri, Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi. However, the painters of Raghurājpur, Hari said, had bribed Subash De giving him fish and vegetables and after a while he only bought paintings from Raghurājpur. De claimed that the painters of Puri made "foreign" (*bilāti*) paintings whereas the paintings of Raghurājpur were "of the country" (*deshī*). Hari attributed the "foreign" quality to the use of shade inspired by calendar prints and the introduction of gloss colours which the Puri painters generally described as having a better glaze than the ordinary water colours[28].

As we saw in chapter 5 shadow and perspective are defining features - the mark of a foreign naturalism. It was, among other things, the criticism of Subash De which caused some of the Puri painters to give up painting *pattas*[29]. As Hari said:

> "After all who likes to be considered "a foreign craftsman" (*bilāti kārigara*) when the painters of Raghurājpur are called "craftsmen of the country" (*deshī kārigara*)?"

If nothing else, Hari's account of the period after Zealey's departure indicates that the poor relationship between Hari's household and the painters of Raghurājpur is not a recent phenomena. The strained character of the relationship might gradually change, among other things, because Hari's daughter has married Ananta Mahāranā's son Bibhu Kumar (E.1.2.1.)

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28 An extra relatively thick line added to the traditional thin black line, or a gradual change in the colour of a dress are described as *shade*. The incorporation of these iconographic stylistic features signifies depth without actually creating the visual effect.

29 Most painters of Puri might have diminished their production of *pattas* but did not, entirely, give it up.

from Dānda Sāhi. As mentioned earlier, Bibhu has close relations in Raghurājpur and sell almost all his paintings in that village.

While Hari rarely spoke about Raghurājpur, Ananta (E.1.2.) often complained about the current state of affairs. He found it difficult to understand the change in the relationship between the two villages. While 50 years ago it had been Dānda Sāhi which was known for its *patta* painters, it was now Raghurājpur[30]. When Zealey first came to that village, she had, according to Ananta, not thought much of the few paintings she had seen but had nevertheless encouraged the artists to paint more.

However, nothing in Zealey's report suggests that she found the quality of paintings in Raghurājpur worse than the ones in Dānda Sāhi. Ananta's account of Zealey's evaluation of the paintings made in Raghurājpur should be seen in relation to his dependence upon the village for the sale of paintings. During my stay in Orissa the painters of Dānda Sāhi often complained that in comparison to Raghurājpur their village had been neglected by officials.

To return to the painters distinction between *deshī* as good and *bilāti* as bad. This use of the terms has roots in a more general dismissal in Orissa of foreign items and ways of living which goes back to the early part of his century if not earlier. It was particularly evident in the *Jagannātha* temple's refusal of certain kinds of vegetables which had come to India from abroad, such as potatoes (in Puri known as *bilāti ālu*), tomatoes (*bilāti bāigana*), and *beet* for example[31].

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30 In Zealey's list of objects, she had offered for sale to the Museum of Mankind she notes, as previously mentioned, Jagannātha Mahāpātra "living in Rajpur" village, next door to Birapratappur village where Panu, Raghu and Rama Maharana live" (Ethnographic document 1664:3). This indicates that Ananta had a point when he claimed that it was Dānda Sāhi (which belongs to Birapratappur village) rather than Raghurājpur which was known for its paintings.

31 Other vegetables which must not enter the temple are cabbage (*bandhā kobi*), carrot (*gājar*), cauliflower (*phula kobi*), turnip (*ulkobi*), onion (*piāja*) and garlic (*rasuna*) all of which are considered polluting (*āinsa*).

Notions of *deshī* versus *bilāti* are not confined to Orissa but have played an important role at the national level where the distinction played a crucial role in the Independence movement[32]. Its significance was marked when Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi left South Africa via Britain and chose to wear the clothes of the Indian peasantry rather than the European clothes he had previously worn in Britain and South Africa. He continued to do so for the rest of his life except in 1917 when he toured villages to collect recruits for the British war effort and chose to wear a *solar topi*, a sun hat normally worn by the British (Tarlo 1992:102). Gandhi's forsaking of European clothes was a deliberate rejection of one aspect of European civilisation[33].

In contrast to the painters of Puri, the painters in Bhubaneshwar hardly talked about Raghurājpur and only when asked. A few painters criticised the Raghurājpur painters, but the majority simply explained why they thought there was a difference between the paintings made in Raghurājpur and those of Bhubaneshwar.

One of the painters who occasionally criticised the Raghurājpur painters was Binod Mahāranā (G.)[34]. He described most of the paintings made in Raghurājpur as *chālu kāma* and, echoing local art specialists, stressed that commercial motivation is incompatible with the creation of art[35].

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32 See for example Satyajit Ray's film "The home and the world" based on a novel by Rabindranath Tagore which questions the methods of the *Swadesi* movement.

33 For further information of Gandhi's experiments with dress, food and truth see his autobiography (1982). For an excellent analysis of Gandhi's problem of what to wear and the discrepancy between the intention behind his choice of dress and people's different interpretations of his use of clothes see Tarlo (1992).

34 Binod never himself brought up this topic of conversation.

35 Due to Binod's monthly salary from the Training Centre it was never money which determined the time he spend on a painting.

Another painter who criticized the Raghurājpur painters was Rabindranath Sahoo[36]. In 1992 he was working on his PhD thesis on Orissan tribal arts[37]. He was acknowledged as a knowledgeable person on crafts and was asked by Lalit Kala Academy to write an article on the process of making *patta* for the Oriya newspaper "Sunday Samaj" (2 December 1990). His relatively close relation with some of the local art specialists might have influenced Rabindranath's attitude to *patta* paintings. During a discussion of the painters of Raghurājpur and their work, Rabindranath said:

> "They continue painting using very few motifs. They do not even try to explore existing old motifs. That is why the tradition (*parampara*) cannot be saved".

Furthermore Rabindranath considered the Raghurājpur painters' use of water colours purchased from the market problematic:

> "Now-a-days they do not use the old colours any more, they work with market colours [so does Rabindranath himself]. That is why *originality* is slowly being eliminated (*lopa heuchi*)".

In his opinion it was important that *pattas* are made according to tradition:

> "It is a rule to keep tradition (*parampara rakshya....bidhi*). An old type painting should have its oldness. Then it will have qualitative value (*gunatmaka mane*) and furthermore be very beautiful".

While in Rabindranath's eyes, the Raghurājpur painters were ruining the *patta* tradition, the *patta* painter Bijoy Kumar Parida (H.), also of Bhubaneshwar, thought that they were the only ones who painted according to the tradition. When asked what he thought of the Raghurājpur painters' remark that painters outside Raghurājpur do not paint according to tradition, Bijay said:

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36 Rabindranath once stated that there was no difference between the painters of Puri, Raghurājpur, Dānda Sāhi or Bhubaneshwar because they have all been taught by the same teachers. However, most of his critical comments were reserved for the Raghurājpur painters.

37 Registered at Utkal University, Bhubaneshwar.

> "What they say is true. But if we [the painters in Bhubaneshwar] would do otherwise, our stomachs would stay empty. We have to make paintings the way the *outsiders* like it. It is different in Raghurājpur because the village has got a *name*".

He also concluded that the paintings made in Raghurājpur were more roughly executed than the ones produced in Bhubaneshwar:

> "In comparison to theirs, our work is more developed (*unnatta*). We make more thin, fine work (*saru, sukhma kāma*)".

It should be noted that traditional work for Bijay was not necessarily viewed as high quality work.

Conclusion

For the painters of Puri district the growing tourist industry has been a mixed blessing. Over the years some have increased their incomes enabling them to enlarge their houses and have access to facilities such as a toilet or a fan. Many, however, like their forefathers (cf. chapter 2, pp. 113-114), depend upon middlemen for the sale of their paintings. For these people commodities such as fans are likely to remain unattainable luxuries.

It is not surprisingly, painters from Dānda Sāhi and Puri (who depend the most on the village of Raghurājpur for the sale of their work), who have the most complex relationship to the painters of Raghurājpur, this being reflected in continuous criticisms of their work. But even amongst the painters of Raghurājpur tension is increasing.

Conclusion

This final part of the thesis is concerned with a set of theoretical issues all related to the problem of the discrepancy between analytic discourse and living practice. In 1994 I returned to Orissa for six weeks to present my interpretations to the painters in order to accommodate their responses to my theoretical formulations. The wish to let painters challenge my vision or narrative has roots in the reflective literature of the late 1980s. "The time is past", says Clifford, "when privileged authorities could routinely "give voice" (or history) to others without fear of contradiction" (Clifford 1988c:7). It is perhaps superfluous to say that contradiction was not something which made me anxious. Contradiction was indeed what I expected and thought of as a vital part of my argument that the Orissan *patta* "art world" consists of different worlds[1]. What I found however was something different but equally interesting.

I explained to the painters that since I had left, I had spent the time writing about what we had then discussed and that I had now come to present them with my analytical formulations and to listen to their opinions on my writings. One of my aims was to communicate my idea of a layered art world to the painters, a task which - as one might expect - proved to be very difficult. Why this might have been the case is the subject of the following discussion.

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1 I agree with Hastrup when she argues that external, explicit anthropological understanding is different from intimate and implicit "native" knowledge (1993:175). However, this should not lead to a dismissal of "native" criticism as irrelevant, as it does in Hastrup's case. The point is that the criticism is part of the plurality of perspectives which must be considered when writing 20th century ethnography.

Before discussing the responses to my proposition, the effect of my questions must be considered. Does it make sense at all to confront the painters with my theoretical model?

The problem of the relation between theoretical discourse and practice has been analyzed in depth by the French sociologist Bourdieu who warns against the tendency to confuse the analyst's point of view with that of the agent's:

> "for example looking for answers to a spectator's questions that practice never asks because it has no need to ask them, instead of wondering if the essence of practice is not precisely that it excludes such questions" (1990:82-83).

Should the questions of the analyst encourage an agent to reflect on her/his practice, the agent will immediately loose the chance of expressing the truth of her practice, says Bourdieu, the point being that practice excludes such questions (ibid.:91).

The reason for this exclusion is to be found in the opposition between the practical mode of knowledge - the basis of ordinary experience of the social world - and theoretical modes of knowledge. One of the essential properties of practice, urgency, is the product of participating fully embedded in practical life. By observing rather than participating, says Bourdieu, "the urgency, the appeals, the threats, the steps to be taken, which make up the real, really lived-in world" are swept away (ibid.:82). Only the person who has withdrawn from practice will be able to see practice from a totalising viewpoint bringing to light relationships that would otherwise go unnoticed (ibid.:82).

Leaving aside the problem of the dominant role structural thinking plays in "The logic of practice"[2], Bourdieu's discussion of the relation between

2 Habitus leaves, as far as I understand Bourdieu, the individual no will of its own.

theoretical knowledge and practice is concerned with a fundamental problem which keeps appearing in various forms in the social sciences and perhaps particularly so in anthropology.

When I have asked painters to explain why they paint the way they do, referring to specific elements such as the preference of light red (*hingula*) as a background colour for example, the answers have invariably been variations on the theme "our forefathers did it like this - it is our tradition, what else can I say". "Tradition" is here used to explain away what can not be talked about. On the few occasions when a painter has talked about tradition, rather than just mentioning the term, it has been used to state a set of fixed practices seen as making up the tradition of painting, such as the drawing of a sketch, or the thin black lines which complete a painting. Does this lack of response reflect a failure on the part of the anthropologist to communicate her interest or is it a fact which in itself is highly revealing?

Interpretations of local exegesis - or lack of the same - on art forms has been profoundly influenced by Anthony Forge's discussion of "the problem of meaning in art" (1979). His article was written at a point in time when structuralist methodology had great currency among anthropologists. Only five years earlier Dan Sperber, "Rethinking Symbolism", aimed to show how structuralist methodology could be used to understand how symbols work and thus help to escape the question of what a symbol might mean. The point for Sperber was that any attempt at explanation would contradict the nature of the symbolic. He argued that it is possible to have a fairly systematic intuition concerning symbolic behaviour without being able to make the feeling explicit (1975:22).

"Meaning" was what Forge was looking for when he studied art in Oceania and for him a structuralist approach offered the possibility of turning an apparent absence of exegesis to interpretative advantage (1979). Forge

argued that only the communication of significant messages at a nonverbal level could explain why people would not have anything to say about the art form on which they spend a major part of their wealth during times of ceremony.

In other words, the content of what was being communicated was thought to be contained within the structure of the art form rather than some accompanying verbal code. This kind of approach typically involved an analysis which aimed to reveal the message of an art form and was performed by disassembling it into its component elements such as shapes or colours, for example. This process would be followed by an examination of the elements and their arrangement, aiming to disclose their significance in terms of the culture as a whole. As O'Hanlon has noted this method allows an informed re-assembling of the art form, through which its messages become apparent (1993:588).

Local verification of the interpretation is not required[3], because the process of verbalisation is thought to possibly discharge the potency of what is being communicated at a non-verbal level (Forge 1979:285-6). What is being argued is that it is the coming to consciousness which destroys the potency of the symbolic[4].

Forge's approach has recently been criticised by Michael O'Hanlon in his interpretation of the wigs of New Guinea Wahgi Highlanders - an interpretation which has much in common with the broad tradition exemplified by Forge's analysis. It draws little on indigenous exegesis, for

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3 Forge writes: "They did not like my probings and questions, and some of my attempts at analysis made them shy away and retire into denials" (1979:285).

4 This aspect of Forge's writing is clearly influenced by the structuralism of Levi-Strauss for whom the efficacy of the unconscious will be destroyed if this latent structure is brought to consciousness. An example is his discussion of "myth and music" in which he argues that serial music, as opposed to Wagner's tetralogy "The Ring", is not mythical precisely because it is created by a conscious manipulation of a mythic structure through an inversion and counter-point (1978:44-54).

relatively little is offered. O'Hanlon, however, suggests that when it comes to the nature of visual art, our own preoccupation with words has led us to conclude too swiftly that an absence of exegesis is the same thing as an absence of verbalisation.

The Highlanders offer very little exegesis on the significance of their wigs, but they do talk about them. Even if this talk may not account for all we might like to explain, it does have its own validity as part of a wider local theory of significance.

In observing that people "do not verbalise" about their art forms, Forge and others, says O'Hanlon, have had a particular model of talk in mind, namely talk as "coding" and contextualising explanation. There has been too hasty a shift from the accurate observation that there is little exegetical talk, to the conclusion that there is, as it were, no talk to speak of. Even if people might not engage in this kind of exegetical talk, at a different level they might still talk about their art, in a process of assessment. For O'Hanlon it is precisely these assessments which are important as indexes of an indigenous theory of significance (1993:604-5).

Non-translatability also emerges as a concern in Maurice Bloch's discussion of ritual amongst the Merina of Madagascar (1974). He draws attention to the contrast between two types of communication, one of which is everyday speech and the other formalised speech acts taking place in a ritual context. The fixity of the latter kind of speech act implies a different kind of meaning from that of the former: formalisation of speech places what is being said beyond logic (ibid.:66).

The aspect of meaning in which Bloch is interested is not the propositional force of language[5], which is lost in formalisation, but an aspect of meaning

5 Bloch describes this force as the "ability of language to corner reality by adapting communication to past perception and connecting this with future perception" (1974:67).

which Bloch refers to as "performative" or "illocutionary force" (ibid.:67). With increasing formalisation propositional force decreases while performative force increases - in other words the two types of meaning vary inversely. This statement enables Bloch to reconsider and reject the common question of what a ritual "explains", and instead attend to the problem of how formalised language communicates without explanation. Among other things he points out that it is the imprecision of words uttered in a performative context (described as having drifted out of meaning) which gives them their social and emotional force (ibid.:74)[6]. There is no hidden code to crack, says Bloch, only the examination of the code in which communication takes place[7]. To Bloch the experience of ritual is an experience fused with its context and an explanation of the content can therefore only be sought after by attempting to explain what the event as a whole is for. It is, in other words, not possible to link the context of ritual directly to the society: rituals are, according to Bloch, mis-statements of reality.

Like Bloch, Lyotard sees the realm of discourse as opposed to that of art[8]. In his work "Discours, figure" he sets out to reveal the limitations of theory, opposing what to him are two radically different realms: on the one hand

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6 We are here reminded of Sperber's discussion of symbols which in his opinion acquire their force from the fact that they are not limited by definition.

7 In his essay on understanding ritual, Lewis argues against the common search for meaning in ritual. He refers to the fact that many anthropologists have reported that whereas people know how to perform their rituals, they might not necessarily be able to provide an elaborate verbal explanation of what the rituals express, communicate or symbolise. "The ruling is explicit" says Lewis, "but its meaning may be implicit...or forgotten and unknown..."(1980:19).

8 In the case of Bloch it is rituals in a village in Madagascar rather than Parisian avant-garde art. It is striking that Bloch and Lyotard draw two directly opposed conclusions: whereas Bloch sees art as an inferior form of communication, characterised by formalisation and the impossibility of linguistic creativity (1974:72-76), Lyotard conceives of the figural as an open field of possibilities which refuses the straitjacket of linguistic closure. This is likely to be related to the different patterns of "art" which serve as the basis for their discussion. The kind of "art" Bloch discusses, ritual dance, is characterised by a rigidity which does not allow for change whereas change or the disruption of earlier models, is the principle of avant-garde art which serves as a basis for Lyotard's discussion.

that of language, communication and discourse and on the other hand that of form, colour, visual figures and designs (Carroll 1989:30).

While nothing new can happen within the first realm "limited to what can be...given meaning within a closed linguistic system" (ibid.:30), the second realm, which Lyotard calls the figural, is "relatively free of the demands of meaning" (ibid.:30)[9]. This realm is characterised by reversal and transgression - here things happen that have never happened before (ibid.:30-31). Art, to Lyotard, has the qualities of the figural and is opposed to theoretical discourse which restrains alterity. Art has a transcendent function and is a realm where "meaning is not produced and communicated, but intensities are felt" (Lyotard in Carroll 1989: 31)[10].

What I find striking in the discussions presented above is that different scholars starting from fundamentally different viewpoints and absolutely divergent sets of data all come to the same conclusion: that aesthetic forms need to be understood as somehow different from discourse. In retrospect this issue is crucial for an understanding of the painters' responses to my theoretical interrogations.

During the first ten days of a six week stay, I presented an elaborate exposition of my perception of a layered art world, a model I had developed on the basis of the material gathered in 1991-92. It was fully presented nine times to nine different painters who, as far as possible, could be said to represent the diverse "community" of painters in terms of skill, area, age and gender. Rather than a homogenous set of replies I expected to receive

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9 I use the figural as Lyotard uses it in the early chapters of "Discours, figure". I will not here attempt to define it more precisely than has already been done, since one of the important characteristics of the figural, as far as I understand Lyotard, is its resistance to any such definition.

10 Lyotard demands, says Carroll, "that art be simultaneously transcendent and critical, constructive and deconstructive, apolitical and radically and profoundly political". In order to fulfil its critical function, art must be art and anti-art at the same time (Carroll 1989:27).

conflicting responses and was therefore not surprised to find that whereas some painters responded to the whole set of ideas, others only picked up a very small part of it.

In general, however, I did not present the whole model but referred to small fragments, repeatedly trying to acquire people's views on my interpretations. However, as we shall see the most significant information was acquired when talking about concrete instances.

I advanced the following argument, the responses to which are listed in full in appendix 2:

> "To me it seems as if the people who make and buy *patta* paintings have different things in mind when they look at and talk about paintings. In the papers I have brought I have written about different groups of people and their ideas of paintings.
>
> One of the groups is the painters, another is local art specialists, and the third is national art specialists such as Pupul Jayakar who visited the Handicraft complex last year, or people who evaluate paintings for national awards.
>
> As far as I understand, painters mainly notice details such as poses, proportions or a rough line for example when looking at a painting. They also comment upon the colours and whether a god has the appropriate weapons[11].
>
> The local art specialists might also talk about these things but their main concern is what a *patta* painting ought to be like: the paintings must be traditional and new ideas must come from traditional Orissan motifs such as murals or sculpture rather than modern calendar prints.
>
> The specialists from Delhi are likewise concerned with tradition. One of their main interests, however, is the idea behind the illustrations, colours and decorations and whether a painting has been done as prescribed in the sāstras.
>
> All of these people, the painters, the local specialists and the national specialists are interested in painting but I think they see and talk about different things when they look at paintings. For that reason I have divided the people who have something to do with *patta* paintings into different groups. What do you think of the idea that painters, local art specialists and national art specialists look at paintings in different ways"?

11 Although the range of iconographic signifiers is more extensive they are always referred to as weapons (*astras*).

Responses and a Reconsideration of the Question

In looking at the responses, fully reproduced in appendix 2, a number of analytical themes emerge related to the painters' different positions and self-perceptions, their abilities as painters, and in one case, gender.

What is most striking, however, is the question of untranslatability which to a lesser or greater extent runs through the responses. In general the painters appeared to have difficulties in thinking about their situation in relation to a more encompassing framework. Unable to relate to my theoretical proposition, the painters reduced the issue to a simple repudiation of facts. Some responded by fragmenting the model into a series of domains, i.e. the domain of painters, versus that of art specialists for example. Each domain was seen as a separate world where people do what they are supposed to do.

There was however, one painter who acknowledged that these worlds need each other, and more specifically that painters can benefit from the knowledge of local art specialists. To Dīnabandhu Mahāpātra (I.2.3.1.), who teaches at the Training Centre in Bhubaneshwar (appendix 2, case 1), an exchange of ideas with local art specialists was not just an academic possibility but part of his everyday life at his work in Bhubaneshwar. Responding to my proposition, Dīnabandhu appreciated the knowledge of art specialists and mentioned how he had borrowed a book on palm leaves from Dr. Dinanath Pathy to get some inspiration for new motifs[12]. Moreover, he acknowledged the importance of introducing new ideas to *patta* painting to escape the otherwise inevitable stagnation of the tradition:

12 Dr. Dinanath Pathy's office at the B.K. College of Art and Craft is a few hundred metres from the Training Centre in Bhubaneshwar. The book was by Dr. E. Fischer and Dr. D. Pathy (1990).

> The local art specialists know a lot, I have sometimes asked them for advice when I need some inspiration. It is important to introduce new ideas, unlike some of the painters here [Raghurājpur] who just go on copying the same paintings again and again. If that continues they will ruin the Orissan *patta* tradition[13].

As far as Dīnabandhu was concerned, local art specialists are not a distant, elevated and inaccessible group of people but rather, a source of useful information. In this respect his opinion is distinct from the majority of painters. Dīnabandhu's attitude must of course be seen in relation to his position at the Training Centre and consequent interaction with local art specialists. It might be his position as a teacher at an official institution which demands that Dīnabandhu objectify the required skills of *patta* painters in a way quite different from traditional modes of *guru*-ships.

However, not all painters with official teaching experience and relatively easy access to art specialists share Dīnabandhu's outlook. A contrasting example was the response of X who taught students *patta* painting in his home in Bhubaneshwar (See appendix 2, case 2). Like Dīnabandhu, X picked up on one aspect of my model only, but, unlike his colleague, X perceived the realm of art specialists as separate from that of the painters:

> What do the art specialists know about *patta* chitra? They might have *doctorates* on traditional folk art but do they know how to paint?...They sit in their offices while we are here .

To X it was crucial to have practical knowledge of painting. He thought any person not possessing this form of knowledge should be disqualified as a possible contributor to the field. It was not so much the continuation of the tradition, as a concern with making a living, which made him support

13 These responses are written on the basis on my notes and I have therefore not marked them as direct (taped) quotes.

the idea that painters ought to see other visual fields as sources of inspiration[14]. He said:

> ..they [the *Chitrakāras*] don't have the ability to *change* and that is needed if we are to fill our stomachs .

For Y as well, it was practical knowledge of painting that was important (see appendix 2, case 3). As in the examples above he responded only to a section of my model when he expressed regret that he did not have any knowledge of *sāstras*. This was quickly turned into an ironic remark:

> "I don't know *sāstras* and only some parts of the *purānas* but specialists they know everything [ironically]. I don't know anything, I just make paintings. Have they ever had a brush in their hand?"

Whereas X and Y stressed the importance of practical knowledge, Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.), Master Craftsman of Raghurājpur, was concerned with theoretical knowledge (see appendix 2, case 4). This resulted in a paradoxical claim when he, in response to my question, disclaimed that art specialists have any knowledge of interest to painters. We have seen that for years Jagannātha has taken pains to collect sections of the *purānas* and also *sāstras* (some of which he does not understand) because paintings, he said, must be done according to the texts[15]:

> .... It is true though that paintings must be done according to the *sāstras*. Writers, poets and other artists keep various writings and get the most out of those books the way butter is produced by churning curd. Poets search for poems, dancers too need books and since we depict forms in paintings we need them as well .

14 It could of course be argued that the keeping of the tradition and making a living are one and the same thing.

15 For a discussion of Jagannātha Mahāpātra's collection of texts see chapter 6, section II.

It is ironic that Jagannātha, whose collection of *sāstras* can almost be seen as an attempt to live up to the demands of art specialists, perceives the spheres of specialists and painters as entirely separate.

This was also true of another painter from Raghurājpur. As was the case in the previous examples, Z (Raghurājpur) responded to an element in my model which focused on aspects of importance to him (see appendix 2, case 5). More than anything else it was Z's attitude to hybridity resulting from the introduction of elements from other visual fields, which made him distance himself from prevalent ideas amongst the local art specialists. For example he objected to the rejection by the award committee of a *patta* made with a sunset. According to Z the painting had been dismissed on the grounds that the sunset was copied from Bombay calender prints. He found it difficult to understand why calendar prints should not be an acceptable source of inspiration:

> We are told not to use [elements from] prints in our paintings, but if we see a print with a beautiful *design* and copy that, then what is the problem?

Hari Mahāranā (A.2.) from Puri refused to enter a discussion of my model at all, separating academic discourse from his work as a painter (see appendix 2, case 6):

> Your government has paid you to write such things, but what about us. We are paid to paint - will anybody pay us to talk about these things?

When he finally did speak about the art specialists, encouraged by a question concerned with art specialists only, it was only to say that he saw art specialists and their activities as totally independent of his world.

Ananta Mahāranā (E.1.2.) from Dānda Sahi simply did not respond to my inquiry (see appendix 2, case 7). Only when I repeated the core of the question did Ananta begin to speak:

> What can I say? You do your work, I do mine, they will do whatever they have to do .

Again a painter expressed the view that the different people participating in the *patta* art world belong to entirely separate spheres or worlds. Another painter from Dānda Sahi, Nrusingha Mahāranā (E.1.1.), also had difficulties with my question and did not respond at all (see appendix 2, case 8). When pressed he suggested I should ask his son who, as Nrusingha said, travels outside Orissa. Another possibility, he said, was to ask the Director of the Crafts Museum in Delhi, Dr. Joytindra Jain, who, as far as Nrusingha was concerned, would know the right answer - he himself had no means of knowing as he always stays in his village. This response reflects a feeling of uneasiness resulting from my question. Nrusingha did not know what to make of my question and therefore directed me to his travelled[16] son and a Delhi specialist, who was also considered to be likely to "know the right answer".

Like Nrusingha, Prema Mahāranā (mother of Gopāla Mahāranā [E.1.3.1.]) from Raghurājpur, assumed she did not have the knowledge required to answer my question (see appendix 2, case 9). Her assumption, however, was founded on a different basis from that of Nrusingha. Having listened to my question, Prema dismissed it as being outside the scope of womens' competence:

> How can women know about that? That is men's work to know and talk about such things. I don't know what to say. Why don't you ask Gopāla?

Rather than being specifically concerned with painting this statement reflects a more general attitude towards gender roles. Like her son, Prema is a painter, although she only paints *jātri patti* on newspaper. She should therefore, in theory, be just as able as any other painter to express an opinion. In the villages of Raghurājpur and Dānda Sahi, however, women

16 i.e. experienced in the art worlds outside the village boundaries.

are not expected to concern themselves with issues other than those directly related to the welfare of the household. By rejecting any knowledge of the issue, Prema thus lives up to a gender stereotype[17].

Final Thoughts

Looking back at my proposition and the responses discussed above, it is obvious that I have fallen into Bourdieu's trap, by asking an impossible question. The ability to produce relations of opposition and equivalence by reference to different situations; in other words to present a synoptic view of the totality of the relationships is, as Bourdieu says, the privilege of the analyst (1990:82). The painters are living in their world and cannot "step out" to acquire the distant synoptic gaze necessary to respond to my model. However, as we shall see, this should not lead to the dismissal of the responses as uninteresting.

The responses illustrate how painters who do not understand my proposition try to work around it. This results in a dialogue of a kind, which worked against the anthropologist and her theoretical proposition. However, even if I had not received the responses to my model that I had anticipated, the painters' reactions did indicate that the problem of translatability between different realms is not simply a theoretical fiction. Moreover, they conveyed an image of a fragmented art world: several painters conceived of other groups in the art world as entirely distinct from their own sphere. Most important, however, (and this springs from the above mentioned factors) the responses indicate how information is conveyed when painters talk about concrete instances.

This observation made me reconsider my notes taken in 1991-92 and 1994 and it seems to me that it is precisely discussions of concrete instances

17 There are, of course, women who continuously break this stereotype.

which have produced the most significant information. A few examples will illustrate my point.

It will be remembered from chapter 6 that Dr. Ratha found that a motif such as a railway station was not acceptable in a *patta*, because such motifs would spoil the purity of the Odissi style. I asked different painters what they thought of Dr. Ratha's opinion.

Dīnabandhu Mahāpātra (teacher at the "Training Centre") argued that Dr. Ratha had a point:

> "Our *patta* paintings are not *natural* paintings, we paint *line painting* showing god. We can of course paint a railway station but it is not our traditional painting. Nowadays people just paint what ever comes to their mind, they think about money only. What Ratha says is true, it will spoil our tradition. We have our Orissan tradition and can make use of that, why try to do *natural* work?"

As previously suggested, Dīnabandhu, takes part relatively often in informal discussions concerning *patta* painting and Orissan crafts in general, amongst other teachers at the Training Centre as well as with local art specialists[18]. The exchange of ideas which takes place during such encounters is reflected in Dīnabandhu's conception of *patta* paintings. His attitude to the possible introduction of new elements is stricter than the attitude of many other painters who do not interact with members of other layers of the art world. His comments suggest, not surprisingly, that these layers affect each other, the ideas of people in one part of an art world permeate the ideas of people from other parts.

Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.) from Raghurājpur found that Dr. Ratha's advice missed the point:

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18 Craftsmen are always invited to attend functions in Bhubaneshwar concerned with arts and crafts. Not surprisingly, the majority of those who turn up are from Bhubaneshwar.

> "It is our tradition to paint god, not railway stations. But if a customer wants a railway station we will of course make it. That does not mean we will only make railway stations. Our tradition goes back a long way, our forefathers did this - did they need *specialists* to tell them what to do?"

To Jagannātha Mahāpātra, a *patta* depicting a realist motif is no reason for concern as it does not hinder the making of traditional motifs. In contrast to Dīnabandhu who has his monthly salary at the Training Centre, Jagannātha cannot afford to disregard an order on the grounds that it falls outside the conventions of *patta* painting. This, however, does not mean that Jagannātha is not aware that a painting made in realist style, for example, represents a break with tradition. This might be what makes him mock the idea that specialists are needed to advise painters on matters of painting.

One is reminded of "The Painter of Signs", Raman, who refuses to paint the slanted letters ordered by a lawyer on the grounds that this type of calligraphy is suitable only for oil merchants and soap-sellers. Raman does not need anybody to advice him on his metier (Narayan 1976:8).

Hari Mahāranā's (A.2.) response conveyed a conception of the world and the lives of specialists as completely separate from those of the painters:

> "You know how it is with these people. They are paid to sit in their offices in Bhubaneshwar. Nobody pays me unless I work, if a customer wants a railway station, will I make one or not? Do you think he will be pleased if I tell him he can have a *Ganesh* painting? You see, we need money to be able to eat".

What is striking in these examples is the difference in the painters' arguments and discursive idiom applied to paintings. Whereas Dīnabandhu (I.2.3.1.) argues for the importance of keeping an unspoiled tradition, blaming painters' economic considerations as responsible for the introduction of new motifs for example, Jagannātha (B.1.) and Hari (A.2.) integrate economic considerations in their arguments for accepting occasional use of new motifs. To talk about the aesthetics of *patta* in isolation, that is without any economic considerations, is the privilege of the

painter who has a fixed monthly salary and an occasional exchange of ideas with local art specialist.

Painters do not necessarily disagree with the judgements made by art specialists, but might object to the limited foundation on which a value judgement is based, or to put it differently the missing consideration of the context in which a painting has been made. An example was the response of some painters to the criticism made by Pupul Jayakar during her visit, discussed in chapter 6. I asked some of the painters who had been present at the Handicraft Complex what they thought of her criticisms.

Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.) could understand the critique but found it unfair:

> "The paintings were poor work, (*chālu kāma*) but what did they expect? With a week's notice it is impossible for us to present fine work (*bārik kāma*), as you know we only have ordinary work (*sadhāraniā*) in stock. We will make *special kāma* if we get a well paid order".

Rather than the result of a careful consideration of the exhibition as a whole, the late Arjuna Mahāranā (E.2.1.) said the critique was the result of a rushed visit:

> "These people are always so busy, they leave almost before they have arrived. She said she was disappointed with our paintings, but did she see them all? She did not see my painting, she did not even come to that end of the room. Some paintings were *chālu kāma* that is true but there were also some really fine pieces, did you see the one made by Bijoy Kumar Parida (H.)? Despite what she said there were several Master Craftsmen present that day, but even Master Craftsmen work according to the order. Time and money is needed to make good paintings (*class kāma*)".

Jagannātha Mahāpātra and Arjuna Mahāranā were both Master Craftsmen and more critical than less skilled painters. Their evaluations of the paintings exhibited are not unlike that of Pupul Jayakar but based on

different criteria[19]. Less skilled painters, however, had more difficulties appreciating the critique and defended their paintings. Niranjana, son of Nrusingha Mahāranā (E.1.1.), for example, did not think there had been a problem. According to him the critique was to be expected from officials:

> "They always talk like that, that is their work".

Clashes do, however, occur between painters' conceptions of paintings and those of art specialists. An obvious example occurred at the Crafts Museum in Delhi in March 1994. I had just come from a meeting with the Director of the Museum Dr. Joytindra Jain who, when I asked him what kind of Orissan *patta* painting he thought worthy of an award, had suggested that I should see one of the old *patta* paintings in the museum collection (recently printed in a museum catalogue [1994]).

From Dr. Jain's office I went to the exhibition ground where four *patta* painters were at work: Raju Das (Hari Mahāranā's [A.2.] brother-in-law) from Puri and Abhi Mahāranā (E.2.1.1.) (son of late Arjunā Mahāranā), Nrusingha Mahāranā (E.1.1.), and his son Niranjana from Dānda Sahi. When I asked Abhi and Raju whether they had seen this particularly beautiful *patta* in the exhibition, Raju confirmed he had seen the old *patta.* He warned me not expect too much as it was not "*class kāma*" but "*old style work*" [sic] because, as he explained, at that time people did not know how to make "fine work". What did excite him and the other painters was that two of the other *patta* paintings had been made by the late Panu Mahāranā (E.1.), father of Nrusingha Mahāranā, who had assisted in making one of the paintings. The *Rādhākrishna* painting certainly had the two names Pana and Nrusingha Mahāranā written in the lotus on which *Krishna* was placed. Panu Mahāranā had also written his name under the white horse in the *Kānchi Bijaya patta.*

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19 Whereas Pupul Jayakar's criticism was of a general kind, that of the Master Craftsmen was directly related to the rough execution.

This discussion of the responses suggests more than simply a clash between analytic discourse and practical knowledge. The painters' responses to my theoretical proposition might not be science or practice, but they are, however, important as reflections upon (or in O'Hanlon's words "assessments of") concrete aspects of their lives. It was this observation which made me reconsider my question and decide instead to focus on painters' comments on concrete instances directly related to the functioning of the art worlds, either noted down during my stay in 1991-92 or as they presented themselves during the rest of my stay in 1994.

The material presented suggests that it is in those situations in which people talk about concrete instances which, as O'Hanlon has argued (1993), can provide an insight into the local theory of significance. The painting, which for a national specialist in crafts stood as an ideal to be emulated by contemporary painters[20], was disparaged by local artists. They considered it inferior work in an "old style" characterised by brisk brush strokes and subtle colours. Tomars' question posed in 1940 of "good art for whom" has remained relevant (Tomars 1940:397).

Summary

The variation in concepts and evaluations of *patta* paintings at different points in their "social life" suggests that the model which most clearly conveys an idea of the *patta* art world is one of an art world consisting of interpenetrating layers or clusters with different semantic registers. These configurations have the character of separate, yet interacting worlds.

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20 In a forthcoming book Greenough discusses how the museum in order to increase the earnings of artisans, persuades artisans to improve the quality of their products among other things by showing them old (or at least what are considered excellent) examples of crafts (forthcoming).

Local *patta* painters from the district of Puri make up one of the clusters of the *patta* art world. As I have shown in chapter 1, considering the economic aspect of craft production is crucial for an understanding of painters' relation to their work. A "pure" interest in the aesthetic aspects of their work is the privilege of art specialists and a few painters who do not depend exclusively upon craft production for a living.

Although the economic aspect of craft production as an employment generating activity plays a very important role, other factors must be considered to present a satisfactory picture of the Indian government's interest in handicraft production. It is not only the writings of early Orientalists but also contemporary government brochures which stress the continuity of "Indian" tradition in handicraft productions.

The pervasiveness of the "Indian" handicraft ideology in the years after Independence is reflected in the writings of the Polish American couple, the Zealeys. It is, nevertheless, Halina Zealey, and not the state government, who has gone down in history as the one responsible for a "revival" of *patta* painting which salvaged an otherwise dying Indian handicraft tradition.

Distinct discourses on *pattas* are characteristic of the different layers of the *patta* art world. There are also, however, variations among local painters' attitudes to the adoption of western elements in *pattas*. Painters of the villages of Raghurājpur and Dānda Sāhi generally reject perspective and shadow as foreign elements that threaten the tradition of *patta* painting. Nevertheless, they adopt other western influenced elements inspired by, for example, calendar prints.

The traditionalist discourse of the village painters contrasts with the pragmatic attitude to western influences common amongst painters of the capital. These painters are generally more receptive to the development of

a new style of *patta* painting. Unconventional elements such as naturalistic touches, perspective and shading of outlines are more often than not part of their paintings.

Generally painting undertaken as part of patron-client relationships is valued for the resulting payment, rather than for the acquisition of merit. There is no prestige attached to the work and painters are likely to leave their traditional work if other ways of earning a livelihood arise.

When painting for religious purposes, painters take care to depict the iconographic attributes of a deity as precisely as possible. The replication of ideal models as well as the technical skill with which a painting has been executed constitute the basic reference points in painters' evaluations of paintings made for tourist consumption. Evaluations of paintings are, however, also based upon a contextually determined significance: who made the painting and for which purpose? Moreover evaluations privilege an everyday reality. Although judgements are contextually determined they are not thoroughly relativistic, framed as they are within an Orissan paradigm of appreciation.

Generally painters do not perceive the suitability of visual fields as possible sources of inspiration in a hierarchical manner. In this respect, as in others, their conceptions contrast with those of local and national art specialists. Although the members of the upper layers of the art world have diverse interests, perceptions, and ideas about *patta* paintings, their conceptions are based upon a common belief in the purity of tradition and are expressed in a supposedly "purely" aesthetic idiom.

The conceptions of the upper clusters of the art world - appropriately distanced from the point of production and the painters - have fundamental consequences on the social life of painters. An award which for art

specialists is concerned only with "pure" aesthetics is read differently by local painters and has other meanings related to social relations.

For state government institutions concerned with the development of local handicraft production the village of Raghurājpur is a great success story: an ever increasing number of people are involved in the tourist industry. For some of these people the production of crafts has proved a viable source of income.

However, for the painters and handicraft producers, as well as the other villagers of Raghurājpur, the increased production and the consequent competition has caused a growing tension which is unlikely to decrease for the time being. During one of our discussions Jagannātha Mahāpātra (B.1.) accurately conveyed the situation of his village and it seems appropriate to give the painter who has played such an important role in the development of *patta* production in this century the last word:

> "As you [the anthropologist] know, our village is well known and some of us have got more money than we used to have but we have lost our peace. You can write that in your book".

Glossary

Abhya - Gesture allying fear.

Abikāra - To invent.

Āburu-jāburu - Messed up; mixed up.

Adhunika - Modern.

Agni - Fire God.

Ahalyā - Wife of the sage *Gautama* (*Rāmāyana*).

Āinsa - Polluted, for example from eating fish; reference to fish.

Airābata - *Indra's* mount (an elephant).

Akhaḍiā - Difficult.

Akrura - The charioteer of *Kansa* (King of Mathura).

Ālata - Fan.

Amābāsyā - New moon/no moon.

Amṛuta beḷā - Nectar time; auspicious moment.

Amṛuta bhandā - Papaya.

Ananta Sayana - Resting on the cosmic snake in eternal sleep.

Aṇasara patti - *Patta* paintings made during *aṇasara.*

Aṇasara - A period of illness for the triad of the *Jagannātha* temple.

Andhabishwās - Blind belief; superstition.

Angada - A monkey in *Rāmāyana.*

Ankuṣa - Elephant goad.

Anukuḷa - (Good) beginning.

Apariskāra - Clear.

Arghāsura - Crocodile demon in *Krushnaleelā.*

Arjunā - The third of the *Pandavas* in *Mahābhārata.*

Āṣāḍha - Month of June-July.

Asampurṇa murṭī - Incomplete figure.

Āshrama - Ashram.

Ashuddha - Unclean (polluting).

Āshwina - Month of September-October.

Astami - 8th in lunar fortnight.

Aṣtra - Weapon.

Aśubha - Inauspicious.

Asundara - Ugly.

Asura - Demon.

Aśvin - One of the physicians of the gods.

Athā - Glue.

Ātmā - Self; soul.

Ayodhya - The capital city of the *Kosala* Kingdom.

Baḍa - Big; great; elder.

Bāḍa - Division of temple servants in the *Jagannātha* temple.

Bādām - Groundnuts.

Badasinghāra - A "dress" of *Jagannātha.*

Baddha - To kill.

Baḍhei - Carpenter by *jāti.*

Baḍhiā - Good; beautiful.

Bāgha - Tiger.

Bahana - Vehicle; mount; animal used for riding.

Bāhāra - Outside; foreign.

Baiśhākha - Month of April-May.

Bāje - Bad.

Bakāsura - Crane demon in *Krushnaleelā.*

Bāḷa - Hair.

Baḷabhadra - Elder brother of *Jagannātha.*

Balarāma - Son of *Basudeba* and *Rohiṇī* and elder brother of *Krushna.*

Bāli - Monkey King of *Kishkindha*; brother of *Sugriba.*

Bālubāluā - Messed up; mixed up.

Bāmana - *Viṣṇu's* dwarf avatar.

Banabāsa - Staying in the forest (*Rāmāyana*).

Banaka - Colouring of figures.

Bandāpanā - Circumambulation of fire.

Bandhā kobi - Cabbage.

Bandi sāla - Imprisonment (*Krushnaleelā*).

Baṇiā - Goldsmith by *jāti*.

Banka māchhi - Bent fly (border decoration).

Barada - Giving gesture.

Barāha - *Viṣṇu's* Boar avatar.

Bārik - Splendid.

Barṣikiā - Death anniversary.

Basṭra Harana - Stealing of clothes.

Basudeba - Father of *Krushna*.

Bāsuki - The cosmic snake, symbolising eternity.

Beḍhapilā - Child of a concubine.

Belāsena - Son of *Bhīmā* (the second of the *Pandavas*).

Besa - Dress; decoration.

Besyā - Prostitute.

Bhāba - Feeling; emotion; thought; devotion.

Bhādraba - Month of August-September.

Bhagabān - God.

Bhāgamāpa - Proportions.

Bhāgiraṭhi - A King who brought *Gaṅgā* to earth.

Bhairava - *Śiva* in his most destructive aspect.

Bhakṭi - Devotion.

Bhala - Good.

Bhangi - Pose; posture.

Bharadvāja - A sage *Rāma* visited while in exile.

Bharata - *Dasaratha's* second son born of *Kaikeyi*.

Bharṭi - Loaded.

Bhāṣā - Language.

Bheta - Meeting.

Bheti - Gift.

Bhikharī - Beggar.

Bhīma - The second of the *Pandavas*.

Bhisma - The son of *Santanu* and *Gaṅgā* (*Mahabharata*).

Bhoga - Offering of food to a deity.

Bhṛuṅgi - The wanderer (bull of *Śiva*).

Bhuāsunī - Village goddess.

Bhubanehsvari - Form of *Subhadrā.*

Bhul - Mistake.

Bibāha - Marriage.

Bibhishana - Younger brother of *Rāvaṇa.*

Bideshī - Foreigner; stranger.

Bilāṭi - Actually "English" but generally used in the sense "foreign".

Bilāti-ālu - Potatoes.

Bilāti-bāigaṇa - Tomatoes.

Bilibilā - Messed up; mixed up.

Bimala - A goddess in the *Jagannātha* temple.

Biṇā - A musical instrument of *Sarasvatī.*

Binchaṇā - Fan.

Bipada - Danger.

Biri - Urad dal.

Bishvāmitra - A sage in *Rāmāyana.*

Bolilā bhaliā - Messed up; mixed up.

Brahmā - The creator; One of the trinity.

Brāhmaṇa - Priests by *jāti.*

Brahmapadārtha - The immortal life substance.

Brahmin - See *Brāhmana.*

Bṛuhaspati - Jupiter.

Bruṣabha - *Siva's* bull.

Buḍḍha - Gautama Buddha; founder of Buddhism.

Budha - Mercury; son of the moon.

Buḍhā - Old man.

Byabasāya kāma - Work made for business.

Chāhālī - Pre-school; teaching-institution.

Chāhāṇi - The way a person (or god) looks at another.

Chaiṭra - Month of March-April.

Chakra - Wheel.

Chālu Kāma - Everyday market work (not of a very good quality).

Chanara - Whisk.

Chanda - A border design.

Chandan jātrā - A festival (*Baiśhākha sukla* 3)

Chandan - Sandalwood; sandal-paste.

Chandini - Platform.

Chandra - Moon; one of the nine planets.

Chānduā - Drape.

Chāpa - Boat.

Chaṣā - Farmer by *jāti*.

Chhati - Ritual umbrella.

Chauka - Square.

Chāula - Paddy offered for deities.

Chāuḷa - A platform.

Chhuān - A state of pollution.

Chitā - Tatoos.

Chiṭrakāra - Painter by *jāti*.

Chitrapatimahal - Picture-palace.

Chhota - Small.

Chuḍā - Flattened uncooked rice.

Chuna - Lime.

Dakshinā - Monetary prestation.

Dāḷa - Branches.

Dambaru - Drum.

Dāna - Gift; donation; present.

Danta - Tooth.

Darkār - Necessary.

Darśana - Viewing; seeing; beholding.

Dasaharā - Festival (*Āshwina sukla* 10).

Dasaratha - King of the solar race and father of *Rāma*.

Dayanā - A flower.

Debaki - Wife of *Basudeba* and mother of *Krushna*.

Debaṭās - Deities.

Deha - Body.

Demphi golei - Round stem.

Deshī - Of the country.

Deuḷa - Temple.

Dhaḍi - Border.

Dhāla - Shield.

Dhāna - Paddy.

Dhanu - Bow.

Dharibāra - Position.

Dharma - Righteous; sacred duty.

Dharmshāḷā - Lodge.

Dhāu - Colloquial term for the colour *geru*.

Dhoba - Washerman by *jāti*.

Dhoti - Men's lower garment.

Dhupa - Incense.

Dhyāna - The visualisation of a particular aspect of the divinity described in a *sloka* and represented iconographically; deep concentration.

Doordarshan - National television network.

Draupadi - Wife of *Pandavas*.

Durare pākhare - Far-away-near-by.

Durgā - Consort of *Śiva*.

Dvāpara juga - One of four ages in which *Dharma* decreased by two quarters.

Ekādasi - 11th in lunar fortnight and sacred to devotees of *Viṣṇu*.

Gabeṣaṇā - Research.

Gachhapaṭra - Trees and leaves.

Gadā - Mace.

Gaḍhā - The build of a figure.

Gahaḷiā - Complete; replete; crowded.

Gai - Cow.

Gājar - Carrot.

Gāmuchhā - Men's lower garment.

Gaṇeśa - Son of *Śiva* and *Pārvatī*; Elephant-headed pot-bellied god of wisdom and remover of obstacles.

Ganesh - See *Gaṇeśa.*

Gaṅgā - The all-purifier; goddess descending to earth via *Śiva's* matted locks.

Ganjapā - Orissan card game.

Ganjei - Intoxicant.

Garuda - The King of birds.

Gauḍa - Cowherd by *jāti.*

Gauranga - Form of *Krushna.*

Gautama - Sage and husband of *Ahalyā* (*Rāmāyana*).

Geru - Red ochre.

Ghanti - Bell.

Ghāsa - Grass.

Ghazals - Muslim love poetry.

Ghungat - Veiling (Hindu practice, North India).

Giri Gobardhana - Lifting the mountain *Gobardhana* (*Bhāgavata Purāṇa).*

Golei - Circles.

Gopī - Cowherdess.

Gopinatha - Form of *Krushna.*

Granṭha - Big book.

Guḍa - Molasses.

Guḍiā - Confectioner by *jāti.*

Guha - A chieftain of hunters (*Rāmāyana*).

Gunduchi cusā - Squirrels.

Guru - Teacher.

Guru sisya paramparā - The tradition of learning from a *guru.*

Gurukula āshrama - Place where apprentices stay with a teacher to learn a skill.

Hākim - Leader of a particular group of *sebakas* in the *Jagannātha* temple.

Hansa - Swan.

Hanumān - Monkey headed demigod; selfless helper and devotee of *Rāma.*

Harijans - People of god; term invented by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.

Hariṭāḷa - Yellow; acquired from orpiment.

Hāta - Hand.

Hāti - Elephant.

Hayagriba - Horse-headed-aspect-of-*Viṣṇu.*

Hinguḷa - Red; cinnabar.

Hisāba - Calculation.

Holi - Colour festival (*Chaitra Krusna* 1).

Hrustaprusta - Stout.

Indra - The supreme soul.

Indrajit - Son of *Rabaṇa* and conqueror of *Indra.*

Jāgāghara - Men's body building association.

Jagannāṭha - "Lord of the universe"; manifestation of *Viṣṇu.*

Jāgir - Land given by temple administration for ritual services.

Jagyna - Sacrificial fire.

Jāli - Chequered.

Jamalā Arjuna - The twin *Arjuna* trees (*Bhāgavata Purāṇa*).

Jāmbaban - The King of bears (*Rāmāyana*).

Jamunā - Tributary of *Ganga*; immortalised by *Krushna* who spent his childhood at the banks of the river.

Janma - Birthday.

Japa - Rosary.

Jashodā - Wife of *Nanda* and foster mother of *Krushna.*

Jasti - Stick.

Jatayu - Semi divine eagle and friend of *Dasaratha* (*Rāmāyana*).

Jāṭi - Local endogamous group.

Jātri - Pilgrim.

Jāṭri patti - Pilgrim paintings.

Jhaḍeinedā - A Sweet; *mahāprasāda* of the *Jagannātha* temple.

Jharā - Hanging things.

Jinisha - Things.

Jogāniā - Supplier of food.

Juddha - Fight; war.

Judhisthira - The eldest of the *Pandavas*; son of *Kunti* and *Jama.*

Jyeṣṭha - Month of May-June.

Kachhapa - *Viṣṇu's* tortoise avatar.

Kaḍamba - A tree (nauclea cadamba) associated with *Krushna.*

Kāgaja - Paper.

Kahani - Story.

Kaibalya - Dried,cooked rice; *mahāprasāda* of the *Jagannātha* temple.

Kaikeyi - Mother of *Bharatha.*

Kalā - Art.

Kaḷā - Black.

Kalāgara - Artist.

Kālī - The consort of *Rudra* or *Bhairava* (forms of *Śiva*); the most wrathful form of the Goddess.

Kaḷi juga - One of four *jugas* and a period of decay.

Kāḷiyadalana - Subduing the snake *Kāliya.*

Kāma - Work.

Kanā - Cloth.

Kānchi Bijaya - Victory over the kingdom of Kānchi.

Kāngulā - A border design.

Kansā - The King of *Mathura* who was killed by *Krushna.*

Kārigara - Craftsman.

Kārigari - Craftsmanship.

Karna - Son of the sun and half brother of the *Pandavas.*

Kārṭika - Month of October-November.

Kārtīkesvara - Lord of war and son of *Śiva* and *Pārvatī.*

Kārukārjya - Intricate work (decoration).

Kausalya - *Dasaratha's* eldest wife; mother of *Rāma.*

Kāvya - Poem; poetry.

Kesi - A horse demon killed by *Krushna* (*Bhāgavata purāṇa*)

Ketu - The descending node.

Keuta - Fisherman by *jāti.*

Khadga - Sword.

Khāibi hāṭare - The (right) hand with which one eats.

Khāli khāli - Empty; lacking.

Khamba - Pillar.

Khāndaba - The forest which was burned by *Agni* assisted by *Arjunā.*

Khanda niḷa - Blue.

Khandāyaṭṭa - Farmer by *jāti.*

Khānti - Pure.

Khāss - Special.

Khilāna - Arch.

Khumbhakarna - Brother of the demon *Rābana.*

Kolatha - Gram (deep brown).

Kotha - Organisation responsible for the properties of (village) temples.

Krishnaleelā - See *Krushnaleelā.*

Krushnaleelā - Play; sport of *Krushna.*

Krusna pakhya - Dark lunar fortnight.

Kshyetra - Conch shell; symbol of Puri town.

Kuḷa - Lineage in its broadest form.

Kumara - The eternal youth; incarnation of *Viṣṇu.*

Kumbha - Earthen pots.

Kumbhas - Little triangles.

Kumbhira - Crocodile.

Kuṭumba - Blood relatives through male lineage.

Ladu - A sweet of *Gaṇesa.*

Lahara - Wavy (for example a border).

Lakshmana - Son of *Dasaratha* and *Sumitra*; faithful brother of *Rāma.*

Lakshmi - Consort of *Viṣṇu* and goddess of prosperity.

Lakshminārāyana - *Lakshmi-Viṣṇu.*

Lalitā bhangī - Delicate posture.

Laṭā - Creeper.

Lekhana - Instrument to engrave palm leaves.

Leelā - Divine play; sport.

Lingam - Phallus symbol of *Śiva.*

Madana Mohana - Form of *Viṣṇu.*

Māgha - Month of January-February.

Mahā deva - Great god; *Śiva.*

Mahābhārata - The epic of the *Bharatas* describing the war between the *Kauravas* and the *Pandavas.*

Mahāprasada - Food offered in *Jagannātha* temple.

Mahesvara - The true divinity; *Siva.*

Mahisā - The powerful; King of the anti-gods.

Majhi - Middle.

Māḷī - Gardener.

Māmū - Mother's brother (any close male friend of mother's brother's generation).

Mandira - Temple.

Mangala - Mars; one of the nine planets.

Māṇikā - The milkmaid in the legend *Kānchhi Bijaya.*

Manonibesha - Concentration.

Manṭra - Spell.

Maṭa - Opinion.

Mātali - *Rāma's* charioteer.

Mathā/tassar - Raw silk.

Matha - Monastery.

Mathurā - Kingdom of *Kansa.*

Māti - Clay.

Matia - Brown.

Matsya avatāra - *Viṣṇu's* fish avatar.

Maujā - Revenue village.

Mausā - Mother's sister's husband.

Mausi - Mother's sister (any female friend of mother's generation).

Māyā - Illusion.

Māyā mruga - Golden deer illusion.

Mayura - Peacock.

Megha - Clouds.

Meḷa - Fair.

Mithila - The capital of *Videha,* the kingdom of *Sītā's* father *Janaka.*

Motā - Thick.

Mudrā - Gesture.

Muga - Mungh dal.

Mukha - Head.

Mukhiā - Leader.

Mulya - Value.

Munda - Forehead.

Murṭī - Figure.

Musā - Rat.

Nabagraha - The nine planets.

Nabagunjara - An Orissan form of *Viṣṇu.*

Nābakeḷi - Playing boat.

Nabamī - 9th in lunar fortnight.

Nāga-kanyā - Serpent maidens or deities.

Nāhāka - Astrologer by *jāti.*

Nakal - Copying.

Nala -Architect of the monkeys; responsible for building the bridge (*Rāmāyana*).

ṇamaskāra - Greeting.

Nanda - Husband of *Jashodā* and foster-father of *Krushna.*

Nandi - The joyful; bull of *Śiva.*

Nandikesvara - The lord of gladness, bull of *Śiva.*

Nārada - A sage (incarnation of *Viṣṇu*).

Nārāyana - *Viṣṇu.*

Narka - Hell.

Nātangi - Dancing.

Naukā - Boat.

Niān - Fire.

Nijoga - A ritual division among *sebakas* of the *Jagannātha* temple.

Nila - Blue.

Nindā - Condemn; talk bad about.

Nisuni - Ladder.

Niyama - Rule.

Nosta - Ruin.

Nrusingha - Man lion avatar of *Viṣṇu*.

Oḍhaṇā - Veiling.

Oḍissi - Orissan.

Oltā-poltā - Messed-up; reverse; opposite.

Pachā - Green; (colloquial term).

Padma - Lotus.

Padma singhāsana - Lotus throne.

Pāhāda - Mountains.

Pāhādiā - Grey (colloquial term).

Pakhāḷa - Watered rice.

Pākhudā - Petals.

Pāna - Betel.

Paṇā - A kind of fruit Lassi.

Pāna patri - Betel shaped.

Panchabati - The place of *Rāma's* hermitage while in exile.

Pāncha topi - Groups of five dots.

Panchamī - 5th in lunar fortnight.

Panchāmruta - Five nectars.

Panchāyat - Village council.

Paṇḍā - Priest in the *Jagannātha* temple.

Pandit - Priest.

Pānji - Almanac.

Paramparā - Tradition.

Pardā - Veiling (Muslim practice, North India).

Parīs - Fairies.

Pariskāra - Clear.

Parsurāma - *Axe-Rāma*; avatar of *Viṣṇu.*

Pārvatī - Consort of *Śiva*; reincarnation of the goddess *Satī.*

Patās - Wooden plaques painted for the purpose of worship.

Paterā - Stone carver by *jāti.*

Paṭiṭapābana - Image of *Jagannātha.*

Paṭra - Leaves.

Pāṭra - Pot.

Patta or *patta chitra* - Painting on canvas.

Patti - Canvas; mat.

Patwari - Local officer responsible for land records.

Paunji - Anklets.

Pendua - Braid of grass.

Phālguna - Month of February-March.

Phālṭu - Useless.

Pharsa - Axe.

Phula - Flowers.

Phula-kobi - Cauliflower.

Piāja - Onion.

Pihuli - Yellow (bazaar-colour).

Pīlā - Child.

Pinchha - Half flower pattern.

Piṣtha - Pedestal.

Pothi - Palm leaf Manuscript; book.

Prajā - Ruled.

Prakruṭa - Natural; real; actual.

Pramāṇa - Proof.

Pramānita - Proved.

Praṇāma - Greeting with respect.

Prasāda - Gift of gods (usually food); favour; kindness.

Preranā - Inspiration.

Pujā - Ritual worship; worship ritual.

Punji - Clusters of dots; five dots corresponding to the four fingers and the thumb.

Puṇya - Merit.

Purāṇa - "Stories of old"; Religious works of Hinduism.

Purṇimā - Full moon.

Pusha - Month of December-January.

Puspaka bimāna - Flying chariot; gift of *Brahmā* to *Kubera* and stolen by *Rābana.*

Putanā - An infant killer; suckled to death by *Krushna* (*Bhāgavata purāna*).

Rābana - The demon king of *Lānka* in the epic *Rāmāyana.*

Rabi - Sun; one of the nine planets.

Rādhā - A *gopi*; favourite sweetheart of *Krushna.*

Rādhāmohana - *Rādhākrushna.*

Raghunatha - Another name for *Rāma.*

Rāhu - The ascending node which causes eclipses; one of the nine planets.

Rājā - King.

Rājasik - Foods which have a heating quality.

Rākshyasa - Demon or malignant spirit inimical to man.

Rāma - *Dasaratha's* eldest son born of *Kausalya.*

Rāma Abhiṣeka - Consecration of *Rāma.*

Rāmāyaṇa - Earliest Indian epic; story of *Rāma* and *Sītā* in exile.

Ranga - Colour.

Rāni - Queen.

Rāsa - A circular dance round a fixed centre.

Rasuṇa - Garlic.

Raṭha jāṭrā - Car festival.

Rekhā - Line.

Rishi - Seer; sage; renouncer of the world; has performed many penances; an equal to the gods.

Rishyashringa - A sage responsible for sacrifice performed by *Dasaratha.*

Rosaghara - Temple kitchen of the *Jagannātha* temple.

Sādhā - Plain (vegetarian food).

Sadhārania - Common; ordinary (colloquial term; commonly known as *sadhārana*).

Saḍhei - Coconut shell.

Sāḍhibandhā - Tying the sari; dedication ceremony of temple servants (*Jagannātha* temple).

Safā - Clean; pure.

Safeda - white (bazaar colour).

Sāja basā - "Sitting instruments"; *pujā* held during *Durgā Pujā.*

Sakata asura - A bullock cart demon (*Bhāgavata Purāṇa*).

Sakhi - Female companions.

Sākshyāṭ - Meeting.

Sāmanṭa - Ruler.

Sampurṇa murtī - Complete figure.

Sandha asura - A bull demon (*Bhāgavata Purāṇa*).

Sangama - Confluence of, for example, tributaries; a place which is auspicious and ritually pure.

Shani - Saturn; one of the nine planets.

Sankha - Conch; (traditional) white colour made from sea shell.

Sankhapaṭā - Decoration (most commonly with white).

Sankhatopi - Dots.

Sankrānti - Day of one of the twelve zodiacal constellations.

Sāntā - Lord; master (male).

Sānṭāṇi - Lord; master (female).

Sāpa - Snake.

Saptami - 7th day in lunar fortnight.

Shara - Arrow.

Saralarekhā - Straight line.

Sarasvatī - Consort (or daughter) of *Brahmā*; goddess of wisdom and the patroness of arts and music.

Sarsā - Extraordinary.

Saru kaḷā - Thin black line.

Sāsṭra - Rule; treatise; textbook.

Sata anguliā punji - Design of seven petals.

Saṭa - Truth.

Sātvika - Classification of foods said to have a cooling quality (vegetarian).

Satya juga - One of four *jugas*; eternal righteousness; the golden age.

Saundarjya - Beauty.

Sebā - Service.

Sebaka - Servant.

Seshanaga Bāsuki - The cosmic serpent (*Ananta*), symbolising eternity.

Shāsana - Highest ranking *Brāhmaṇas* in Orissa.

Shatrughna - *Dasaratha's* son born of *Sumitra* (twin of *Lakshmana*).

Sheṣabhoga - Last meal offered to a deity.

Shiaḷa - Toddy makers by *jāti.*

Shuddha - Ritually pure.

Silpaśāstra - Rule; treatise; textbook on arts.

Simhikā - A demon who tried to obstruct *Hanumān* on his way to *Lanka.*

Sindura - Red bazaar powder colour.

Singha - Lion.

Singhāsana - Throne.

Sītā - Wife of *Rāma.*

Śiva - Third member of the divine trinity; the destroyer.

Sḷoka - Stanza; a fixed number of verse lines.

Snāna vedi - Bathing platform of the *Jagannātha* temple.

Srāddha - Ancestor worship.

Sṭhāitwa - Stability; force.

Sṭhaḷi - Place.

Subha - Auspicious.

Subhadrā - Sister of *Balabhadra* and *Jagannātha.*

Sudarshana - Beauteous sight; wheel-of-*Viṣṇu.*

Sudhhi - Pure.

Sūdra - Fourth and lowest *Varna.*

Sugriba - Younger brother of the monkey King *Bāli.*

Sukhma - Fine; delicate.

Sukḷa pakhya - Dark lunar fortnight.

Sukra - Venus, one of the nine planets.

Sumanta - Minister of King *Dasaratha.*

Sundara - Beautiful.

Sunya - Space.

Supanakhā - Sister of the demon *Rābana.*

Susena - The physician of the monkeys in *Rāmāyana.*

Swadeshī - Indian nationalist movement.

Swarga - Heaven.

Swarga nisuni - Ladder leading to heaven.

Tādakā - Demon killed by *Rāma.*

Ṭāmasika - Classification of foods said to have a heating quality.

Tāndaba - *Śiva's* cosmic dance; symbol of the divine play (*leelā*).

Tantī - Weaver by *jāti.*

Tapas - Penance; austerity; ascetic practice.

Tarabariā - Fast; hurriedly (for example work).

Tassar - Raw silk.

Ṭenṭuḷi - Tamarind.

Ṭhākurā - God.

Ṭhākurāṇi - Goddess.

Thiā-baḍhiā - Painting illustrating the triad in the *Jagannātha* temple.

Tiffin - Snack.

Tipaṇā - Sketch.

Topi - Dots.

Treteyā juga - One of four *jugas*; *dharma* has decreased by a quarter.

Ṭrisuḷa - Trident.

Truna asura - A demon killed by *Krushna* (*Bhāgavata Purāṇa*).

Ṭuḷāsi - Basil plant; sacred to *Viṣṇu.*

Ṭulī - Brush.

Ugrasena - King of *Yadus*; *Krushna's* maternal grandfather.

Ulkobi - Turnip.

Unnatta - Developed.

Upāsa - Fast.

Varna - Colour; Sanskrit name for the original four castes.

Vishvakarma - "All-maker"; Architect of the world.

Viṣṇu - One of the *trimurtī*; the principle of duration; preserver.

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Appendix 1
Visiting Tourists
and their Choice of Paintings

This appendix presents some examples of tourists' evaluations of the *patta* paintings discussed in the first section of chapter 5.

The tourists who visit Raghurājpur come from various cultural backgrounds and have different experiences when it comes to appreciating art. While some have never considered the question, others have made art an important part of their lives. It would therefore be futile to attempt any generalisations about the choices of Indian tourists for example as compared to those of German, British or Japanese tourists. Instead a few examples of tourists' responses to the collection of paintings discussed in the first part of chapter 5 will be presented to convey an idea of the varied tastes with which the painters are confronted during their interaction with tourists.

The tourists, referred to, came to Raghurājpur while I was in the village and agreed to meet me subsequently in Puri to be interviewed[1]. Most of the foreign tourists had heard of Raghurājpur in the tourist information centre in Bhubaneshwar or read about the village in Lonely Planet's "Travel Survival Kit"[2].

Mike from England found the painting depicting *Krishna, Jashodā*, a cow and a calf (cf. chapter 5, figure 65) very simple, edging towards primitive art whereas Julie from Holland described it as "naive". Mike then added:

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1 It was not possible to interview the tourists during their visit to the village as that would have interfered with the transactions between painters and tourists in which I was often asked to mediate as translator. I have not attempted to analyze the tourists' responses. The purpose of the presentation is simply to convey an idea of the complexity of market requirements.

2 Raghurājpur is mentioned in Lonely Planet's Travel Survival Kit. India. (1993:495).

> "...just a little bit more than naive and simple, there is something very attractive about it... I don't know.... it looks original it doesn't feel particularly like it is mass-produced".

Jessica from London really liked the painting:

> "Oh, wow that is beautiful, they have made it so rich, yes that is definitely something I would have bought. I like the composition but the colour is outstanding, the richness of the colours is very beautiful".

Marga from Holland did not like it because of what she thought a mixture of styles and the fact that it had been finished too quickly. Archana from Calcutta had no doubts when she said it was very nice whereas her husband Rajeev described the depiction as traditional but thought the proportions were all wrong:

> "..it is a very poor reproduction of a cow or an animal. Very poor indeed. The trees are the best part of the picture".

John, an art connoisseur, of England thought that the decoration of the human beings and the calves was far too elaborate and described the colours as traditional:

> "...they haven't changed for hundreds of years. Proportions haven't changed for hundreds of years. It means no progress. All art must have progress. This is static, apart from the cows which show a little progress, the rest are static. The leaves are remarkably Greek in influence. There must have been a cultural interchange. The decoration is quite...it could have come from the caves of Ajanta".

Julie (Holland) preferred the painting of *Krishna* and *Jashodā* (cf. chapter 5, figure 65) to the painting depicting *Ganesh* (cf. chapter 5, figure 62):

> "I like artistic [work], I like when you can see that there is real feeling in it. Still I can really appreciate the details, the precise [execution in the *Ganesh* painting]".

Jessica (London) would never choose the *Ganesh patta*:

> "It is rigid. Fineness and details are not a criteria. The colours are not to my taste but perhaps they are much more authentic. It is not that it matters whether it is authentic or not, it is purely a matter of how I feel about it".

Marga (Holland) would not buy it because she did not like the figure which in her eyes was too fat. She thought that *Ganesh* had a sort of prudish look about him. She did, however, like the style of the painting and would have preferred the *Krishna* and *Jashodā* painting (cf. chapter 5, figure 65) to have been done the same way. Archana considered the *Ganesh patta* very unusual with his flying hair and the snake around his neck. But she found the personification very strong and preferred the execution of *Ganesh* to the one of *Krishna* and *Jashodā*. John (England) found the depiction of *Ganesh* amusing and described the god as something of a dandy who could have been walking down Piccadilly at the turn of the century, using his axe as a stick and his prayer beads as a sort of fashion accessary. The roof he described as a product of Islamic influences.

Mike thought that the painting depicting *Rādhākrishna* and two *gopis* (cf. chapter 5, figure 64) felt more authentic than what he had seen in the village earlier that afternoon which looked as if they were mass-produced, he added:

> "There is a feel about it, it is hard to say just exactly what it is. It looks as if the man might paint like that today and just a little bit different tomorrow. Whereas the other ones I saw today, if they were done tomorrow they would be exactly the same".

Archana (Calcutta) considered the features of *Rādhākrishna* and the *gopis* very poor: "The nose, the mouths, the eyes, the hair, even the body is not in symmetry with the face".

Marga (Holland) thought the painting was very nice and liked the shape of the figures describing them as neither too big, nor too small. Jessica (London) thought the painting was lovely, it was in particular the combination of the colour and the imagery she found very pretty. Lone

(Denmark) liked the painting for its movement and described the figures and the grass as "dancing".

Whereas Mike thought that the painting depicting *Kāli* (cf. chapter 5, figure 63) was fabulous, Julie described is as too "messy", the artist having tried to depict too much. Marga (Holland) thought it was well executed and particulary liked the white flowers but found it too violent for her taste. Archana of Calcutta described it as "very imposing and volatile" and was surprisingly disturbed by the violence in the painting. She did not like "very war like features of god" and would be unhappy to have it in her home. Still she found the painting very competent and stressed the artist's success in evoking this violent feeling. John from England thought it was awful:

> "Nobody would really want to look at this painting. It is too gruesome, and dreadfully depressing. I wouldn't have it in my home, I wouldn't frame it".

Like John a woman from London didn't like the *Kāli patta* at all. She found the imagery and the colours quite aggressive. Lone (Denmark) found it disgusting, it was in particular the contrast between the cut off head in *Kāli's* hand and the "romantic" border which provoked her response. Her sister described the painting as horrifying.

John (England) found the *patta* depicting *Bhisma* on his bed of arrows (cf. chapter 5, figure 69) absolutely dreadful:

> "Oh, God this is even worse. Why is she sort of worshipping this man who has [arrows] stuck through him, I don't understand it. Primitive paintings are all right but they must have some appeal...very primitive, they still haven't progressed. It is static, it does hold a few ideas from various places but there is no development. It hasn't reached the "art stage". It is still primitive craft. These paintings do not serve any purpose. A picture must give pleasure, otherwise what is the idea of painting a picture".

Julie (Holland) found the same painting funny and liked it because it is simple, "almost like the naive paintings". Mike (England) found it very attractive and so did Archana (Calcutta), who described the colours as

"soothing". Marga (Holland) flinched when she saw it and asked if it depicted somebody subjected to torture, whereas Jessica (London) found it amusing:

> "I like it immensely. It is just like a cartoon. I think it is very comic".

Lone (Denmark) did not like it because of what she thought was the pain depicted. However, after she had heard the story behind the painting she quite enjoyed looking at it.

Seeing the painting depicting *Nabagunjara* (cf. chapter 5, figure 68) Julia (Holland) exclaimed:

> "Oh, this painting is precious, I love this. For me it is either that, the big rough artistic [one] (cf. chapter 5, figure 65) with lots of feeling and movement or this really precise miniature".

Of all the paintings he had seen Mike preferred it and found it "quite splendid", stressing that although it contained a lot, the motif was not lost. Lone (Denmark) described it as being fairy tale like, whereas Jessica (London) found it too complex to be able to appreciate it. Christine (Holland) didn't like it at all, first of all because one had to stare at it for a long time to see what it depicted and secondly because it did not give her any emotional feeling at all. Archana and Rajeev both liked the *Nabagunjara* painting stressing particularly the fine craftsmanship. Archana described the proportions as much better than those she had previously seen, while John (England) said that this painting also had been made by a mediocre craftsman having little sense of proportion.

Julie (Holland) thought the *jātri patti* (cf. chapter 3, figure 27) looked like an "African naive kind of painting". Mike found it very attractive but wouldn't buy it because it did not remind him of anything Indian. Jessica (England) had bought several *jātri pattis*, which she thought looked "really medieval". Moreover, there was something "earthy about them, a bit like a

Klee". She would have preferred it if the paintings she had purchased had been signed because "it would have made it more personal". Marga (Holland) liked the *jātri patti* very much "because it is so primitive", whereas her friend Christine found it "interesting". John (England) described it as really crude, a "baby drawing not worth collecting". Likewise Rajeev was not impressed:

> "This is something I would never look at, I mean it is something that little more than a kindergarten child would just possibly....very crude paintings. They are trying to depict *Jagannātha*, but it doesn't really depict *Jagannātha* to my mind, the colours are wrong, the facial expressions are wrong, the proportions are all wrong, there is nothing right about it".

It is tastes as varied as these that the painters of Raghurājpur must cater to if they want to sell their paintings and this has (as we saw in chapter 5, p. 317) occasionally surprising consequences.

Appendix 2

Responses to the Theoretical Proposition Presented in the Conclusion

The first group of interviews presented here include those who acknowledge that they are part of a tradition and that they need experts who know about the tradition[1]. This type of response is followed by examples which demonstrate ambivalence towards experts. The scale continues and ends with examples of people who do not respond, either because they do not think they have anything to contribute or because my questions are incomprehensible.

Case 1:

Dīnabandhu Mahāpātra (I.2.3.1.) (*patta* painter), Bhubaneshwar/Raghurājpur

Q:

> "To me it seems as if the people who make and buy *patta* paintings have different things in mind when they look at and talk about paintings. In the papers I have brought I have written about different groups of people and their ideas of paintings.
>
> One of the groups is the painters, another is local art specialists, and the third is national art specialists such as Pupul Jayakar who visited the Handicraft complex last year, or people who evaluate paintings for national awards.
>
> As far as I understand, painters mainly notice details such as poses, proportions or a rough line for example when looking at a painting. They also comment upon the colours and whether a god has the appropriate weapons.
>
> The local art specialists might also talk about these things but their main concern is what a *patta* painting ought to be like: the paintings must be traditional and new ideas must come from traditional Orissan motifs such as murals or sculpture rather than modern calendar prints.

1 As my tape recorder had broken down when I carried out these interviews, the responses are not marked as direct quotes. This presentation is made on the basis of the notes I took during the interviews.

The specialists from Delhi are likewise concerned with tradition. One of their main interests, however, is the idea behind the illustrations, colours and decorations and whether a painting has been done as prescribed in the sāstras.

All of these people, the painters, the local specialists and the national specialists are interested in painting but I think they see and talk about different things when they look at paintings. For that reason I have divided the people who have something to do with *patta* paintings into different groups. What do you think of the idea that painters, local art specialists and national art specialists look at paintings in different ways"[2]?

A: It is true that it is good to see old wall paintings. When looking at Buguda one realises what a great work it is. It is very old, still it looks new to our eyes, so it gives us some inspiration (*preranā*). As you know I asked Dr. Pathy to give me his book on palm leaves[3] to get some new ideas. But we can also get some ideas from calendar prints such as the poses of the figures for example. The important thing is to see many different things.

Q:

Do painters, local art specialists and national art specialists look at and talk about paintings in different ways?

A:

The local art specialists know a lot. I have sometimes asked them for advice when I needed some inspiration. It is important to introduce new ideas, unlike some of the painters here [Raghurājpur] who just go on copying the same paintings again and again. If that continues they will ruin the Orissan *patta* tradition.

Case 2:

X, (*Patta* painter), Bhubaneshwar.

Q:

A:

What do the art specialists know about *patta chitra*? They might have *doctorates* on traditional folk art but do they know how to paint? That is the main thing. But if they say some painters ought to see temples and wall paintings to get new ideas then they are right. The *Chitrakāras* make the same kind of paintings as their forefathers used to do, they don't have the ability to *change* and that is needed if we are to fill our stomachs.

Q:

So *Chitrakāra's* can benefit from listening to the art specialists?

---

2 In this appendix "Q" refers to this question unless otherwise stated.

3 Fischer, E. & D. Pathy (1990).

A:

Why do you ask? You know how it is. They [the art specialists] sit in their offices while we are here [the painters are in their homes].

Case 3:

Y, (*patta* painter), Puri

Q:

A:

I don't know *sāstras* and only some parts of the *purānas* but specialists they know everything [ironically]. I don't know anything, I just make paintings. Have they ever had a brush in their hand? The ones who have make *modern* art[4], what else is there to say?

Q:

You could tell me whether painters, local art specialists and national art specialists look at and talk about paintings in different ways?

A:

What can I say?

Case 4:

Jagannātha Mahāpātra, (*patta* painter), Raghurājpur

Q:

A:

What do these specialists know? They write a book and get a position in a government office, that is why they think themselves important. We have been painting for generations, it is our tradition, so who do you think knows better, they or we?..... We have to do our work, they should do their work, so we can work in peace [i.e., not interfere in things that are none of their business]. It is true though that paintings must be done according to the *sāstras*. Writers, poets and other artists keep various writings and get the most out of those books, the way butter is produced by churning curd. Poets search for poems [other than their own], dancers too need books and since we depict forms in paintings we need them as well. The mind gets new *ideas* when it sees several writings. But what do most people do now? They do not bother to see these things. In my paintings I have expressed ideas from my book but they [other painters] just copy my paintings without bothering to look at the texts.

Q:

But do you think painters, local art specialists and national art specialists look at and talk about paintings in different ways?

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4 More than two of the local art advisers are painters, one experiments with traditional postures and forms and the others work as abstract painters.